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THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY

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THE

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

BY

GEORGE GALLOWAY, D.PHIL., D.D.

PRINCIPAL OF ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS

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THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY

ITS DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE

BY

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The Baird Lecture, 1917

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PREFACE

IN 1915 the writer was appointed lecturer on the Baird Foundation. In normal circumstances the lectures would have been given in 1917, but owing to the war their delivery was postponed for a year. This volume contains the lectures as they were read in Glasgow in January and February 1918. They include, however, a considerable amount of matter which had to be omitted then owing to limitations of time.

At present the subject of Immortality is one which provokes a great deal of interest and discussion, and various books and essays have appeared dealing with the problem in some of its aspects. But the present work follows a line of its own, and this perhaps may serve to justify its appearance. If the line of thought here developed should prove suggestive and helpful to those whom this great theme attracts or perplexes, the author will feel well rewarded.

G. G.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, ST. ANDREWS,
April 1919.

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THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY: ITS PRESENT INTEREST AND IMPORTANCE

IT can hardly be denied that human immortality, if it be a fact, profoundly affects the meaning and value of life in this world. To accept or deny the existence of a world beyond the present, correspondingly influences our conception of our duty here and now: it will matter much to us all if we can reasonably regard this experience as a stage to a higher experience. To establish the reality of an existence after death has been an age-long problem. The universality of death is patent; and though death may be robbed of its sting, the sombre fact remains. The world in which men live is a world full of change and decay, a world where nothing continues in one stay. We commonly speak of death as an evil; yet it is evidently bound up with the

present constitution of the world, and, in the long-run and on the whole, it works for good. The reproduction of the species is not compatible with the ultimate permanence of individuals in the present order of things. Life wears out the organism, and the species can only maintain its freshness and vigour by the constant passing away of the old and effete and the birth of the new. In the case of mankind this continuous coming and going of individuals makes progress possible. To the lower creatures in all their manifold forms death can offer no problem. Governed by instincts and with no self-conscious purpose, they fit simply into the natural scheme of things: they have no outlook beyond it nor desires unsatisfied by it. Death in this instance is a wise provision of nature which manifestly subserves the good of the race.

To man, however, a self-conscious being who transcends the mere life of instinct, who forms ideals and deliberately strives to realise ends, death is felt to be a problem. Can man, it is asked, man who is raised above the natural order and is a living centre of spiritual value, be doomed to annihilation by the same forces which bring about the dissolution of the plant and animal? Does he not belong to a higher realm in which the law which rules in the lower no longer holds? Must some better fate not be reserved for a self-

conscious spirit who looks before and after? These 'obstinate questionings' are peculiarly human: the will to live beyond this narrow 'bourne of time and place' has been strong in men, and it has issued in a faith that what is essential in them survives the disintegration of the body. Hence the human claim to rise superior to the doom of death and to be the heir of immortality.

We are speaking, it is scarcely necessary to add, in broad and general terms. It is not suggested that individuals have everywhere and always precisely the same feelings and ideas on this momentous subject. As a matter of fact, belief in a life hereafter has fluctuated greatly in the course of human history, and the idea has meant much more for some races than for others. It is even possible for a religion to exist without this belief.[x] But, since the advent of Christianity at all events, faith in immortality has formed an essential element in the religious life of Western peoples. Christians stood on common ground in their conviction that God in Christ had brought life and immortality to light. But if faith in a life to come never suffered total eclipse during the Christian centuries, the flame of hope sometimes rose high and it sometimes sank low. In the ages of faith man's high destiny was a sure and confident conviction on which individuals were ready to stake the most vital issues. More-

[x] such, e.g. as -----?

over, the growth and eventual dominance of the ecclesiastical authority tended to suppress doubt, or at least to make it speechless. Under the shadow of the Catholic Church the thought and ideals of the Middle Ages took on an 'other-worldly' colouring. The earthly life was deemed a passing show, and time was spoken of as the 'anteroom of eternity.' The pattern of piety was to deny the world and the flesh, and to look away from this earthly scene to a bright goal in a realm above. In that religious classic of the mediæval time, *The Imitation of Christ*, one remarks the tendency to regard this mundane sphere and its interests as a passing appearance of minor value, while the true and enduring good of the soul is in heaven. In truth, this preoccupation with the higher world at times became almost morbid. And one may agree with the words of a thoughtful writer: "Indeed, the belief in immortality may easily become an unhealthy occupation with a future salvation, which prevents us from seeking for salvation for mankind here. . . . If it be a consequence of the intellectual conditions under which we live in the present day, that the empirical evidences of a future life that seemed most sure and certain to our fathers, have for some of us lost their convincing power, this, in a religious point of view, may not be altogether a loss."[1]

[1] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, ii. 243.

As hinted in the foregoing quotation, the temper and outlook of the modern world, as regards religion in general and the problem of immortality in particular, stand in contrast to those of the Middle Ages. The Reformation marked the beginning of a revolution in religious thought and life. The principle of spiritual freedom which underlay the Protestant movement gradually undermined the claim of the Catholic Church to exclusive authority in matters of faith and conduct; and in the freer intellectual atmosphere which was engendered by the conflict, science and speculation had opportunities of development hitherto unknown. The intellectual achievements of science drew men away from the barren subtleties of Scholasticism, and led them to a new and rapidly growing knowledge of the world in which they lived. There came to them an enlarged vision of the universe and its bounds in space and time, and a fresh insight into the laws which were involved in the order of nature. In this ampler air a greater tolerance developed, and men felt with increasing force the need of revising the traditional doctrines of the Church in the light of their new knowledge. Individuals learned to doubt and question when their fathers were content to accept without criticism the doctrines handed down from the past. So it was inevitable that the idea of immortality should no

longer receive the unhesitating acceptance which had been accorded to it in earlier times. For men had become aware of difficulties where their ancestors found things simple and easy.

But when all is said, the principle of religious authority appeals strongly to human nature, and to cast off all authority is felt to be a dangerous thing. In the case of a cardinal doctrine like that of immortality, scepticism only developed slowly. Many who were doubtful of other beliefs were not prepared to doubt this belief. It is worth noting that among the Deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the belief in immortality was widely recognised as one of the features of the pure religion of nature. Men who had quarrelled with most of the doctrines of the Church still refused to relegate faith in a life after death to the lumber-room of antiquated superstitions. But during the nineteenth century the spirit of criticism became more radical and subversive, and beliefs began to be questioned that in former days escaped question. And if we consider for a little the scope and trend of thought in the last century, it will be clear to us why this should be so.

A main characteristic of thought in the nineteenth century was its grasp of the principle of evolution, and its far-reaching application of the principle to nature and human society. The old

hard and fast division between organic types in nature, and between man and the animal world, melted away in presence of the idea of gradual development. Evolution became the solvent which reduced differences to a fundamental unity. And the whole trend of the evolutionary method, in the hands of men like Darwin and Spencer, was to draw man within the naturalistic scheme of things, even though he was acknowledged to be the culmination of the developmental process. Mankind was conceived as the product of a vast evolutionary movement which extended through untold ages. The inward and spiritual side of life was neglected, when man was construed as the product of a purely naturalistic evolution. In this vast evolving universe human beings appeared to occupy an utterly insignificant place. And it seemed plausible to ask, whether an enormous claim like that to immortality could possibly be justified. Hence religious faith in human destiny was confronted by radical doubt. The case for the sceptically minded has been vividly put by Dr. J. G. Frazer in his recent Gifford Lectures: "When they turn their eyes from man himself to the place he occupies in the universe, how are they overwhelmed by a sense of his littleness and insignificance! . . . And they ask, Shall a creature so puny and frail claim to live for ever, to outlast not only the present starry system but every

other that, when earth and sun and stars have crumbled into dust, shall be built on their ruins in the long hereafter? It is not so, it cannot be."[1] To those of this way of thinking, man's demand for immortality seems to rest on a supreme exaggeration of his own importance.

But perhaps we shall be told, that man's high place in the universe and the legitimacy of his hope of a life to come are authoritative religious truths. Yet the force of this argument has been greatly weakened by historical criticism and the study of religious origins. The critical work done last century, whether we accept it or not, has certainly been an important factor in diminishing the authority of traditional religious doctrines. For its tendency has been to emphasise the human element in these doctrines. The former days of simple trust and unquestioning acceptance have passed away, and the appeal to authority has lost its convincing power in the eyes of many. To illustrate what I mean. To those who are sceptical of a future life it would be useless to urge the resurrection of Christ as a proof. The reply would be, that the resurrection is itself in need of proof, and so should not be made a basis for further conclusions. And we have been told recently that "it is impossible to argue from the *bodily* resurrection of a divine being to the survival

[1] *Belief in Immortality*, pp. 470–471.

of the soul of ordinary men."[1] When doubt adopts a more radical form, the old arguments naturally fail of their effect. Take another illustration of the way in which older lines of evidence have become antiquated. Formerly people were invited to see an argument for immortality in the grain of corn which dies in the earth to live anew, or in the chrysalis which dissolves in giving birth to the butterfly. Now we are told the analogy is not *in pari materia*: we cannot fairly argue from certain transformations *within* the terrestrial order to something which lies *beyond* that order altogether.

The modern world is perplexed about many things, and it has a new sense of the difficulties that beset the conception of human immortality. It notes problems and discerns objections where formerly all seemed plain and easy. The free and uncritical use of analogy is made a special subject for comment. If there be a higher world, we are reminded, it cannot be depicted after the analogy of the things on earth. The religious imagination, it is complained, has gone to extravagant lengths in drawing a picture of the next world in terms of the present. This uncritical use of the imagination has no doubt provoked

[1] F. C. S. Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 2nd ed., p. 373. Of course, Dr. Schiller is not denying the doctrine of immortality here, but simply criticising a particular argument for it.

a reaction, and has probably accentuated the tendency to sceptical doubt or denial. The feeling is intelligible, and we must frankly admit that the other world can only be described, if described at all, in terms of thought and not of sense. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the whole conception of the future life has become a perplexing one to the critically minded in these days. The very difficulty we experience when we try to form a coherent notion of an immortal state of being engenders a feeling of uncertainty. For many it stands for a possibility merely, a hypothesis more or less plausible rather than an assured fact. The late Professor Huxley has told us that on this great subject we can have no knowledge; and Herbert Spencer has spoken of immortality as an insoluble problem. It would be too much, I think, to say that the prevailing opinion on this topic among thinkers and men of science is one of dogmatic denial. But the attitude of many is that of nescience, and the tone of clear and confident hope is lacking.

But, it may be replied, the great body of ordinary people do not share the doubts and questionings of the cultured few. And it is true that, in this country at least, there is little sign of a deliberate and widespread abandonment of the doctrine. This, however, is not tantamount to saying that belief in immortality is an active and

general belief, a belief which deeply affects life and conduct. Can we affirm that the subject of immortality is one which is much in the minds and thoughts of average men and women? Can we honestly say that the belief intimately affects their daily ways of acting? I hardly think we can do so. A recent writer on the subject boldly asserts: "While accepting a belief in immortality, and accepting the phrases and forms of the prevailing religion, an immense majority live practically uninfluenced by it."[1] This may be too strongly put, but it seems to me we must at least admit that the men and women who do the world's work are not much occupied with the thought of a future life. How different the feverish interest with which multitudes follow the fortunes of a war or watch the game of politics! Nevertheless, one may draw a too unfavourable inference from this fact. To conclude that faith in immortality had become a faded superstition because it was not constantly on men's lips, would be an error. One must remember that even though the modern citizen's belief in immortality is real, by the force of circumstances mundane interests and events must largely fill his day. The struggle for existence and the urgent pressure of earthly needs claim the thoughts and engross the minds of most people, whatever view they

[1] Osler, *Science and Immortality*, pp. 16–17.

take of the ultimate goal of life. 'The world is too much with us,' and we cannot help it: the work of the day and its multifarious tasks seem to interpose themselves between us and our clear vision of the spiritual world. The other-worldly element in piety fades into the background, and we hear much of a religion realised in common duties.

But though the idea of a future life cannot constantly fill the foreground of a busy man's mind, it may form a stable background which silently yet steadily influences his outlook. Without being a habitual object of thought, it may none the less operate continuously. Is what is possible also actual? Does this great conception work in the popular mind to-day steadily directing the desires and governing the valuations of men? In some cases it may do so; yet it is hardly open to doubt that for many, perhaps for the majority in our age, the thought of a life hereafter has only a very slender influence. The interests and ideals of many seem to lie almost entirely within the mundane sphere, and it would not be easy to say in what way, if in any way, their ostensible belief in immortality acts on their lives. Our age is certainly a worldly one, and it is worth while considering for a little the causes that have made it so.

An outstanding feature of last century was the

marvellous application of scientific knowledge and technical skill to the exploitation of nature in the service of man. The vastly enhanced control of the forces of nature which has been the outcome of scientific insight and mechanical invention has multiplied the means of subsistence, and it has gradually transformed the organisation of society. Hence despite an ever-increasing population, there has been a growing standard of comfort; and with the constant emergence of new wants there has gone the means of supplying them. Material progress during the last two or three generations has been very great, and it is based on the mechanical conception of nature successfully applied to the subvention of human needs. The enormous development of modern industry was rendered possible by the triumphant use of the machine to do the work of many human hands. As we look around us one of the most striking things we see is the application of mechanical skill to supply the multifarious wants of daily life: everywhere we remark the successful application of mechanical means to the ends of productive activity. Now I do not raise at this stage the question of the adequacy of the mechanical view of things. It is a working conception of nature which, within its own limits, is entirely successful: it justifies itself by its results. On the other hand, it is a conception which in itself has no

spiritual or ideal value: its primary use has been the manipulation of nature for the production of material goods and the furtherance of material interests. The most we could claim for the mechanical conception of the world in relation to man's higher good is, that it has helped indirectly to emancipate him from illusion and superstition. Over against this we have to set the fact, that the vast production of material goods and comforts, which has been rendered possible by mechanical science, has fostered the growth of worldliness and materialism. Nature at the bidding of science seemed capable of yielding so much, it ministered so abundantly to human comfort, that men became preoccupied with this world and felt little inclined to look beyond it. Man appeared so well able to win satisfaction for himself through the manipulation of nature, that he felt no compelling motive to turn away from this world to a good above it. One can understand that in such an atmosphere, though there was no deliberate adoption of materialism as a creed, and while religion in its conventional forms was always in evidence, there was none the less a serious impoverishment of the spiritual life. Life lost in spiritual inwardness and depth: thought played on the surface of things instead of penetrating to the reality. Men dwelt comfortably in the realm of appearance; they concerned themselves little

with the realm of ideal truth. Hence the complaint that modern society is superficial, frivolous, and easy-going has had some justification. And yet how little avails it to run to and fro on the earth,

> "And see all sights from pole to pole,
> And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
> And never once possess our soul
> Before we die!"

The dominant temper of our age has been selfish and worldly. Many appear in practice, if not in theory, to adopt the sober verdict of Hume in his unpublished Essay on Immortality: "But if any principle of nature is clear, we may affirm that the whole scope and intention of man's creation, so far as we can judge by natural reason, is limited to this life."

This prevailing worldliness has gone hand in hand with religious indifference and a lack of interest in the ultimate destiny of the soul. When man's treasure is on earth, his heart will be there also: if the mind is full of this world, there is no room for the thought of a higher one. Nor can we draw much comfort from the fact that dogmatic denial of a future life is relatively infrequent, when we know that the stress of earthly interests makes men ignore the question. It is hardly in the nature of things that the worldling should 'think nobly of the soul'; and

even if a form of belief linger on, still a belief which has no working value is doomed to fade and die. One cannot expect that a real faith in immortality will maintain itself, if that faith stands in no vital relation to life. In these circumstances the stupendous crisis through which the European nations have been passing, a crisis whose effects are felt intensely through the whole structure of society, may help to emphasise truths that have lately fallen into the background. The terrible catastrophe which has overtaken Western civilisation, involving as it has done the annihilation of millions of human lives as well as the unlimited destruction of material goods, is calculated to make the most superficial pause and reflect. The unexampled waste of wealth and of individuals who create wealth has shown, as no mere argument could do, how precarious is man's tenure of earthly things. Those who fondly supposed that modern civilisation ensured the continuous existence of a stable society which would duly conserve an abundant supply of temporal goods for human enjoyment have been rudely disillusioned. The boundless egoism and the fierce passions of the natural man have not perished: they are still powerful, and they have shaken to its foundations the existing order of society. The European war has demonstrated the awful danger which besets modern society,

when men and nations become indifferent to the ethical and religious values. If our modern civilisation is to be saved from the baser elements within it, it must be through the frank and full recognition that right is higher than might, and love is better than hate. These are times of sifting and testing, when we are called to ponder well the evil which the gospel of selfishness has brought upon the earth. It may be that Providence is purifying the world as by fire, and that after these calamities the things which cannot be shaken will stand out with new clearness. These tragic experiences will carry an ennobling element within them, if they purge society of its grossness, and cause men to turn with a fresh devotion to the spiritual and eternal values. If life becomes plainer and in some ways harder, we shall thereby learn better the lesson, that "man cannot live by bread alone." To know how to put the things which matter in the first place is a knowledge that is of supreme importance; and this knowledge springs from religion as an inner life of the soul. It is not, I think, too much to expect that the future will bring a revival of religious interest; and it is religion which can deliver the world from the obstinate delusion that a full and satisfying good is to be found in this mundane order of things. If this be the movement of human minds in the days to come, it will carry with it a

fresh sympathy and interest in the problem of immortality. For faith in the higher values means faith in the destiny of the human personality which sustains and realises these values.

The question of immortality, it has already been said, is one of the most important of all questions. The acceptance or rejection of the idea, or indifference in regard to it, radically affects our attitude to life. It bears most intimately on our outlook on things, whether we have to take this present world as the only reality, or if we must regard it as a stage which leads up to some higher form of experience. There is no denying that the point is a vital one, whether or no the whole meaning of life is contained within the present spatial and temporal order. A man cannot be indifferent to the way in which these questions are answered without being indifferent to the highest human interests. Those who frankly face the problem will ask themselves whether man, in the striking phrase of Berkeley, is only 'a thriving earth-worm,' or whether he is the living centre of powers and aspirations which cannot find a full satisfaction in the mundane system of things, and therefore point beyond it. In the Essay from which we have already quoted, Hume boldly accepts the former alternative. "The powers of man," he remarks, "are no more superior to their wants, considered merely in this life, than those of foxes and hares

are, compared to their wants and their period of existence. The inference from parity of reasoning is therefore obvious." [1] But the issue on which Hume spoke with such tranquil assurance is by no means so clear as he supposed. That man's powers in no way exceed his earthly wants is a proposition no one is entitled to assume at the outset; and even a brief consideration will make it plain that there is evidence which tells against it. If man were a purely mundane creature, then he ought to be content with his earthly environment and satisfied with the goods it offers. But if we find that worldly gain and enjoyment do not satisfy him; if there is a 'noble discontent' in human nature which material goods cannot assuage; if the inner poverty of a purely earthly life provokes a reaction of the soul against it;—if these things are true, then there is something in human experience that should make those pause who are tempted to conclude that this present existence is all. Now, that human life does reveal such features few will care to deny. That they carry us far in the direction of a doctrine of immortality we do not assert. But here are facts which do not fit in with the naturalistic scheme of things, and they point clearly to the conclusion that man is something greater than the natural order in which he appears. He is in

[1] Edit. Green and Grose, p. 401.

it, yet not entirely of it. And when we frankly recognise the greatness of human nature, we do not find it hard to think hopefully of human destiny. Those who think meanly of man are commonly most hopeless about his fate. Meanwhile an age which is drawn to religion through painful experience of the poverty and instability of worldly things, may be expected to give a more patient and sympathetic hearing to the case for immortality. Man cannot live on negations nor thrive amid uncertainties ; and the true issue of doubt is a return to faith in some form. When the spirit of faith beats strong within, it carries a man beyond the seen and temporal, and causes him to embrace and hold fast the hope of eternal life.

Let us pass from this aspect of the subject, and make clear to ourselves, if we can, the true nature of the problem of immortality. What is the real question at issue when man claims to be immortal? Is the continued existence of the present body involved in the idea of a future life? The reply to this query, as most will agree, must be in the negative. The decay and dissolution of the corporeal organism after death is an assured fact, and an exact restoration to its former condition presents insuperable difficulties. The idea is definitely rejected by St. Paul, for he says " flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

And it is inconceivable that an organism in which the seeds of dissolution are immanent from the first, and which the life-process gradually wears out, should serve as an abiding basis of spiritual life. If immortality is to be possible, the present body cannot be necessary to the persistence of the soul hereafter.

But further, we must be sure what is meant by predicating immortality of the soul. Do we mean that there is something in man, some element or essence, which defies the process of decay, which is indestructible and therefore eternal? Some have thought so, but the belief is exposed to many objections. The idea that the soul is a simple and indestructible substance, in the body yet not of it, is a legacy from the philosophic schools; but it has fared badly at the hands of modern psychology and philosophical criticism. The psychology of our day gives no countenance whatever to the existence of a mysterious entity within the body termed the soul. The notion has no basis in experience, and is a pure product of philosophical abstraction. In the study of this great problem we must try to divest ourselves of certain lingering prejudices which are really a *damnosa hereditas* from the metaphysics of the past. The notion of an abstract soul-substance is one of these prejudices. But though, in sympathy with modern thought,

we discard the old idea of a soul-substance, we are not, in so doing, damaging the case for immortality. For no ethical or spiritual interest is bound up with this conception. What the doctrine of immortality postulates is the persistence of the self, despite the change which is wrought by death. It requires us to believe that, after the dissolution of this material body, there is a survival in some form of that personal life which has been developed on earth. Thus we can agree with a contemporary thinker when he tells us, it is more correct to speak of the immortality of the self than the immortality of the soul, inasmuch as our words will be more free of misleading associations.[1] But no harm will be done by using the old and familiar word, if we are careful to attach a proper meaning to it. For the soul is just the self: it is the self-conscious principle which is the basis and condition of rational thought and action. The conception of immortality centres in the belief that the self, which is the living ground of values and the condition of memory, persists beyond death.

In this connexion it is very common to use the phrase *personal immortality*. Note the significance of the word 'personal' in this connexion. It brings out the truth that the persistence, after the death of the body, of some unconscious substance

[1] J. E. McTaggart, *Human Immortality and Pre-Existence*, p. 10.

or substratum is not the kind of survival that is in view. A survival of this sort, where no conscious connexion was experienced between the new existence and the old, would not conserve elements which are essential to the spiritual idea of immortality. For the endurance of a sub-personal basis of life after death would not be *our* immortality: to this the persistence of a self-consciousness which links the present to the past is necessary. The word 'personal,' however, ordinarily connotes something more than self-conscious: it implies this, but it is a richer notion. The concept of personality carries with it the thought of manifold relations which the self sustains to the outer world and the society of other selves, as well as the body of memories which are involved in these relations. A personal life is the life of a self which maintains its interest and realises its continuity through these relations to the world and other selves. Personality is therefore a more developed idea than that of the self; and it is natural to ask, how far a conception which draws so much meaning and colour from mundane conditions can be carried over into the supramundane sphere. Are there not elements in human personality which must lose their meaning when earthly conditions are transcended? A full discussion of this point is not possible at this stage, for the nature of personality and the limits

it implies raise some of the most difficult problems of metaphysics. It may be enough to say now, that it is not essential that the whole system of earthly memories and relations should be carried into the world beyond, in order that the elements of value in the notion of personal immortality may be conserved. A great mass of our earthly experiences which have silently gone to the making of personality are not consciously remembered by us, yet this does not rob them of significance and value. It is sufficient that we remember enough to maintain a continuity of interest and to recognise our spiritual identity in the experiences through which we have passed. So the essential thing is that a connexion should be consciously realised between the life here and the life to come; and this, as we know from our own history, is possible, even though a man forgets much and cannot help doing so. This continuity, be it said, means more than mere persistence of being, and it must do so if the elements of value in the idea of immortality are to be preserved. The ethical and religious element in the notion depends on the fact of personal identity despite the transformation of the environment, and the old conception of metempsychosis in sacrificing this continuity becomes destitute of religious worth. If we reduce the idea of immortality to the persistence of an un-

conscious substratum of being, we empty it of any specific ethical value.

There is yet another aspect of the problem which deserves mention in this preliminary survey. I mean the question how far the idea of duration enters into the essence of immortality. In the vulgar conception it certainly plays a considerable part. To the common mind to be immortal usually means to persist indefinitely in time, to go on living through unending ages. And yet to sober reflexion the bare idea of an indefinite quantitative extension in time is not satisfying. It is not the mere endlessness of the life which seems of so much account, as the quality of the life itself. Pure duration in time, for beings constituted as we are, does not seem specially desirable: indeed it might mean an unbearable monotony.[1] Tennyson has given expression to this feeling in his *Tithonus*, who pines 'a gray-haired shadow' at 'the quiet limit of the world,' cursed, not blessed, with the gift of unending life:

> "Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
> And after many a summer dies the swan.
> Me only cruel immortality consumes."

To go on indefinitely doing nothing, or doing the same thing, is not attractive to us: a life of perfect

[1] On this point cf. Jowett's remarks in his Introduction to the *Phædo* in his translation of *Plato*, vol. ii. pp. 175–176.

monotony is a life that no human being would willingly choose.

But if immortality in the sense of endless extension is a very inadequate idea, can we give a better and more satisfying content to the notion of eternal life? Or, to put it differently, can we make plain to ourselves what is the essential and really valuable element in the idea of immortality? We shall perhaps be led to an answer, if we ask what is the human need that finds its satisfaction in the doctrine. From the practical point of view it is the limitations and uncertainties, the divisions and separations incident to the time-process, which man dreads. He longs to be delivered from the law of mutability and decay which he sees at work all around him. It is freedom from this law and superiority to it that he hopes to gain through the possession of eternal life. He seeks in immortality to win a security of being and a fulness of life which the world cannot give. The doom of mortality is felt to be hard, for it entails painful breaks and separations; and death is bitter when it cuts short the developing life in its incompleteness. Time carries men away as with a flood, and the place which knew them once soon knows them no more. To be immortal is to transcend the power of time and of death and all that death means. Immortality is not mere endlessness: it is fulness and completeness of life.

I come back for a moment to the thought already emphasised—the thought that, if immortality be a fact, it is a fact of the most far-reaching importance to mankind. No scientific problem which exercises human thought can compare with it in this respect. For a scientific problem only deals with a particular bit of experience and in some one of its aspects: it carries within it no message for life as a whole, nor are man's outlook and ideals profoundly affected by it. The problem of immortality is far wider in its scope, and its issues are deeper and more urgent. If the idea which underlies it be true, then this earthly experience points beyond itself. The history of finite selves is then but a stage in a larger movement, and through the temporal history the soul passes on to a higher good. It deeply concerns human interests and ends whether this mundane experience is a final or only a transitional one. It should make a great difference to human conduct, whether the ultimate good lies within the world-process or transcends it, whether here and now we can realise the best, or if 'the best is yet to be.'

Before drawing this chapter to a close, I shall try to indicate briefly the lines which the present investigation will follow. Our treatment to some extent will proceed on historical lines, and we shall begin by tracing the development of the idea

of a future life. We shall sketch broadly its growth from the lower to the higher culture, indicating the salient features in the development. In this way we shall satisfy ourselves how far the conception is a genuine outgrowth of man's nature and represents a persistent human demand. We shall then deal with the attitude of science to this question, and consider whether it is in a position to draw conclusions either favourable or adverse to the idea. In this connexion something will be said on the recent results of Psychical Research in so far as they bear on our problem.

We shall then turn to the conception of immortality as a historic problem of philosophy, and endeavour to form an estimate of what the speculative treatment of the question has yielded. The two concluding chapters will discuss what is most vital in the subject, most vital because here if anywhere positive conclusions may be reached. In the first of these chapters the ethical argument for immortality will be examined. The issue will be a decision, whether the conception can be put forward as an ethical postulate or not. In other words, Is immortality necessary to the coherency of our world of values, or, in a large sense, to the rationality of our universe?[x] The last chapter will consider the place of immortality in a religious view of the world. We shall ask if the legitimate

[x] or "Is immortality an idea wh. must enter into a truly rational view of the world

demands of the religious consciousness require us to find a place for it in the spiritual scheme of things. Or, to put it briefly, Is immortality an idea which must enter into a truly religious view of the world?

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA

LIKE other things, the doctrine of immortality has been gradually developed. From crude and elementary beginnings it has, in the course of time, assumed a more refined and spiritual form. In the various stages of its growth the idea has expressed what was significant in man's attitude to the universe and life. And we can hardly understand the part the belief has played and continues to play in human history, unless we know how it has evolved and been modified in the course of time. A study like this is preliminary in its nature, and it is futile to suppose it can solve ultimate problems. But by following the historico-genetic method we help to define our problem, and to see more clearly its bearings and the factors to be considered in seeking a solution. We discern better the meaning and value of an idea or institution by extending our vision beyond the present to embrace its growth in time. In this way we can best judge what a principle or a belief has done and may be

expected to do for mankind. The genetic method is a familiar one at the present day; and this is a consequence of the success with which the conception of evolution has been applied to the interpretation of nature and life.

It is important that we should have reasonable ideas how far the historic method is likely to take us. Its function is preparatory. It enables us to understand how men of various races at very different stages of culture regarded the question of the life hereafter: it reveals to us the needs and desires they expressed in their vision of a world beyond the present. So we may be able to form an opinion as to the catholicity of the claim to survival after death, and of the strength and persistence of the demand which is embodied in the claim. But while this historical and psychological study can prove an invaluable preparation for a discussion of the truth of the doctrine of immortality, it cannot be taken to establish or to refute its validity. Although we trace the development of beliefs on immortality, this does not justify us in pronouncing how far these beliefs are true and how far they are illusory. The mere existence of a belief is no guarantee that it is valid, as we know well from practical experience. And in entering on the historic study of a conception we do not, speaking broadly, prejudge the question of its truth. We

put ourselves, however, in a better position to deal with it.

In connexion with this there is another matter on which it may be well to say a word of warning. The question of origin should be carefully distinguished from that of validity. In the popular mind the two ideas are apt to be confused, and the results are unfortunate. For example, if we can trace a great idea back to a mean and rudimentary beginning, some think that the lowly ancestry of the notion casts doubt on its truth and value. The worth of the end is somehow supposed to be affected by the circumstances of the beginning. In a like way the child's humble parentage and upbringing are used to cast doubt on the man. The appeal to prejudice is always easy: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" So in the present case we may be told it tells against our current ideas of the soul and its destiny, that they may be shown to be lineally descended from the beliefs in ghosts and spirits held by primitive peoples. If the process began, it is argued, in superstition, superstition it will remain to the end. The contention as it stands is no doubt fallacious, for the process of development might reveal a steady purification of ideas and a gradual elimination of superstition. But the argument draws a certain plausibility from a secret confusion of thought. Origin may

denote merely a beginning in time, but it may also signify ultimate source and ground; and the beginning in time may be surreptitiously identified with the real cause and explanation. And admittedly, if the ground of a belief is erroneous, the belief itself is likely enough to be mistaken, even as an unstable foundation makes the rest of a building insecure. But the historical and psychological beginning is not the ground and explanation of all that follows: it would be truer to say the beginning is explained by the end, as the child is explained by the man. In any case, it is a grave mistake to treat the temporal origin of a process as a measure of the truth and value contained in the whole evolutionary movement. The later ideas which follow the earlier fall to be judged on their own merits, not by the ideas which preceded them. If we clear our minds of prejudice, we shall not suppose that a great conception, any more than a great man or a great institution, is discredited by a humble beginning.

We shall not, then, seek to make our historic study of the growth of belief in immortality yield a judgment on its intrinsic truth or validity. Nevertheless an investigation of the kind is not without value; and it may even turn out to be a support of faith, albeit it affords no proof in the strict sense. If, on other grounds, we find man's faith in a life hereafter is justified, the upward

movement of human thought in this direction through the ages will help to confirm this faith. The impressiveness of the human claim to survive death will be enhanced, when it is seen to be the genuine expression of human feelings and desires in many lands and in many times. Nay more, the historic data will at least cause the student to pause ere he comes to the conclusion that this persistent hope is only an illusion. He will hesitate before he pronounces the verdict, that mankind in this matter has been the victim of an age-long error.

The ideas of primitive men show everywhere broad similarities. Human needs and desires are fundamentally the same, and the interpretations which early man put upon the world followed the same general principles. Thus animism and spiritism are universal in primitive culture, for man from the first projected his own life into the things around him. Nature, he instinctively believed, was like himself alive, and all around him spirits were active who could help or hurt human beings. He judged the world after the analogy of himself, and the notion of dead or inanimate matter was foreign to the rude savage. In keeping with this we find in the lowest culture the idea of death as the fate of all living things is unknown. If an individual died, this was not thought to be the result of any natural necessity.

Man left to himself would go on living indefinitely; that he did die was due to sorcery or evil spirits. Thus the Abipones of Paraguay and Aracaunians of Chili attributed death to the activity of sorcerers; and the Indians of Guiana and the native Australians gave the same explanation. Among the last mentioned the belief was widely diffused that no one could die a natural death, and a like idea prevailed among the Malagasy.[1] Even death by violence appears to have been deemed unnatural; only gradually was it recognised that disease and accident might operate in cutting life short. The fact that death was not thought to be a part of the natural order is apparent from the myths and tales told to explain its origin on earth.

Almost without exception primitive peoples believe in survival after death. Instances in which the conclusion has been drawn that certain savage tribes had no such belief, can usually be shown to rest on some misunderstanding. In truth, the same natural instinct which made the savage project his own life into things seems to have made it easy for him to think of himself surviving after death. Some part of him he believed—and certain facts went to confirm his belief—lived on after his body had fallen a prey to decay and dissolution. It would be wrong to

[1] For illustrations, *vide* Frazer's *Belief in Immortality*, p. 34 ff.

imagine that the savage cherished the idea of immortality in our sense of the word. The idea of an eternal and indestructible spirit or essence lay beyond his narrow vision. What he did believe was that something in man lived on, if not eternally, at least for a period after death. What was this something which primitive man almost universally believed was not destroyed with the extinction of the bodily life? To answer this question we need to understand man's early ideas about the nature of the soul.

The word *soul* did not connote for the savage just what it does for us. He meant more by it than the life pure and simple; but he did not identify it, as we are wont to do, with the personality or conscious self. The notion of the self or ego, as a spiritual principle, was far too refined and developed an idea for him. This will be evident when we see how the savage came by the belief that he possessed a soul or spirit.

Among anthropologists there is general agreement that the experiences of sleep and dreams had a decisive influence in forming the first ideas of the soul. For primitive man the dream was a real experience, and in dreams he wandered in distant places while his body remained in the same place. In dreams, too, he met and conversed with men who had died. But if the dream experience is a real experience, this must mean

that man is a kind of double being; that there is a shadowy image or finer replica of himself which can move freely in space, leaving the body and returning to it again. Moreover, it seemed impossible that the dead could appear to him in sleep, if they did not exist somewhere. Other experiences confirmed primitive man in his belief in the reality of a finer copy of himself and of other persons. The shadow of the individual cast upon the ground, or his reflexion in water, were sure tokens of the existence of this spectral double. How natural, then, to suppose that after death this shadowy ghost, this less material image of the man, survived and haunted the earth! Another and very primitive notion that the soul was in the breath, and escaped from the body when the individual breathed his last, was blended with the former conception. And both found expression in the belief in a ghost or impalpable essence, for the most part invisible yet occasionally appearing to men, haunting the body but sometimes leaving it. It must not be supposed that a soul of this kind was a self in the proper sense. The soul so conceived was not spiritual as we understand the word: it was still a sensible existence, though of a finer and more rarefied nature than the body. Even in a comparatively developed religion like that of Homer the ghosts of the departed are in the end material

beings who have got rid of their earthly grossness.[1] The conception of a purely spiritual being belongs to an order of ideas remote from primitive peoples, whose minds were bounded by the horizon of the senses. The crude and elementary character of the soul or ghost, as conceived by savage races, is clear from their attitude towards it. It was a kind of uncanny thing capable of doing harm to unwary people. Fear of the spirits of the dead goes as far back as we can trace the evolution of mankind, and the feeling survived after savagery had given place to civilisation. The existence of this primeval dread is attested by some curious and naïve burial customs. For instance, the piling of stones on the grave of the dead and the transfixing of the body with a stake, were rude attempts to prevent the ghost from returning to trouble the living. The carrying of a corpse out of a house by the window, instead of by the door, was originally designed to prevent the spirit from finding its way back by the familiar path. From this it is evident that early races conceived the souls of the dead to be in their midst, and more especially in the places frequented by their owners when alive. Very common was the idea that the ghost or soul hovered near the spot where the body was buried, and was benefited by gifts and offerings at the

[1] *Iliad*, xxiii. 1. 66–67, 99–101.

grave. The belief was widespread that, if the burial rites were neglected or not rightly performed, the dead man's spirit was doomed to wander haplessly to and fro. We meet this idea among the Brazilians, Karens, and other tribes, and classical students will remember the same notion lingered long among the Greeks. The use made by Sophocles of this belief in the *Antigone* is familiar. In the stage of culture out of which these burial customs arose there was no conception of a special place or abode of the dead; their spirits were supposed to linger in the old environment, for the most part near the body, and they were propitiated by gifts placed upon the tomb. It was a widely recognised act of piety to provide these propitiatory gifts for the souls of the departed. Nor was this custom confined to the lowest levels of religious development. For example, such offerings played a conspicuous part in the organised religious life of ancient Egypt. The care taken to preserve the bodies of the dead by the Egyptians, and the scrupulous provision made for their wants in the underworld, are due to the survival of primitive ideas within this developed religion.

The catholicity of the belief in the survival of the soul strikes the student of primitive culture. The belief was unhesitating: our far-off ancestors were not troubled by 'obstinate questionings'

about the fate of the soul, or by haunting fears that it might have perished with the body. "With them a life after death is not a matter of speculation and conjecture, of hope and fear; it is a practical certainty which the individual as little dreams of doubting as he doubts the reality of his conscious existence."[1] Certain features in burial customs testify strongly to this assurance. Thus, the slaves or followers of a king or chief were willing to suffer death, that they might go to serve their departed master in the next world. In the old Congo realm the female slaves who were to guide the dead potentate in the other world were cheerfully buried with him. In Dahomey we are told that volunteers were proud to be the guide of honour to the deceased ruler. If this unquestioning faith surprises us, we have to bear in mind that these individuals were part of a system or social whole in which these beliefs were deep rooted, and had embodied themselves in the immemorial customs of society. They were borne in on the individual simply and inevitably from his environment.

One can trace a gradual development in the ideas about the abode of the spirits of the dead. The rudest conception, as we have seen, is represented by the belief that the ghost haunts the old environment, and more especially the grave of the

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality*, p. 468.

deceased. It was only a pallid shadow, still burdened with human needs but without the means of satisfying them. Hence its assumed dependence on the ministrations of the living. The notion that the soul passes into a world beyond forms no part of the most primitive group of ideas on the subject. But by and by there was evolved the belief in a distinct place or realm of the dead into which the souls of the departed were gathered. In this land of the dead the spirits engaged in occupations like to those of living men. Human fancy naturally selected places remote from the immediate environment, places not easily accessible—for instance, distant islands or high mountains. Thus the islanders of the Torres Straits imagine the souls of the dead go to the mythical island of Kibu in the far west.[1] It was natural that the region of the sunset should be associated with the country of the dead; and so the myth of the sun with his gorgeous descent in the west played a part in locating the land of spirits. It was in the far west that the Fortunate Islands lay. Again, the apparent descent of the sun beneath the earth at evening served to suggest the thought of a realm under the earth where the souls of the dead dwelt. In contrast to this the vault of the sky was sometimes identified with the place of the dead. But

[1] *Vide* Dr. Haddon's paper in *Anthropological Essays*, p. 181.

much more widespread was the belief that the abode of the departed was in the underworld. The idea was not confined to the religions of the lower culture: it maintained itself in religions which had long passed the primitive stage. One recalls how, in the old Egyptian faith, Osiris ruled over the souls of the dead in his kingdom in the underworld. And the Greek Hades and the Hebrew Sheol are illustrations of a like conception finding a place within developed religious systems. On the other hand, the belief that the land of the departed is somewhere on earth, belongs mainly to the lower levels of religion; and, for obvious reasons, it dwindles and vanishes with advancing civilisation. The fact that the place is shifted from the earth to the sky betokens the growth of higher ideas about the soul, as well as a deeper sense of the mystery of the change wrought by death.

The idea of a place where the dead are punished is not found in the lower culture. The notion of hell is remote from the mind of the savage, and there is no ethical element in his view of the relation of the life here to the life hereafter. Truth to say, for primitive man survival after death meant a mere continuance, and there was for him no organic connexion between the one state and the other. Even in religions which fix the abode of the dead in the underworld, the

place itself was at first a receptacle of all souls without distinction. The realm of the departed, as it is represented by Hades, Orcus, and Sheol, exhibits a colourless and depressing uniformity. According to the Homeric poet, the lot of the meanest wight of earth is better than that of a king in the underworld. This sombre and monotonous existence, where all souls fare alike, was at length diversified; and differentiation was due to the demands of the principle of ethical retribution.

The change in outlook brought about by the growth of the moral consciousness did not come without preparation, and several motives conspired to pave the way to distinctions in the future state. Among the lower races, differences of rank on earth were sometimes thought to be continued after death. Among the Fiji islanders dead princes were believed to go to the stars, while it was the fate of the souls of common men to go to the earth. Similarly the Ahts of Vancouver imagined the high chiefs went to a home in the sky, while the souls of common Indians returned to the earth. Among the Tonga islanders aristocratic souls went to an island paradise, but plebeian spirits perished with their bodies. The Greenlanders imagined that strenuous workers would pass after death to the Happy Land of Torngarsuk.[1] Still it is plain that early peoples

[1] *Vide* Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 85–86.

did not import these distinctions into the future life under the guidance of ethical feelings. Nor is there any evidence that they made the fate of the dead depend on their observance of religious rites when they were alive on earth. The ground, as has been suggested, was prepared for the retributive idea of the other world by the belief, that what gave prosperity and renown here would also give it hereafter. The great warrior or hunter would also have his eminence in the other world, for his powers raised him above the lot of common men. One can discern here a means of transition to the higher conception of ethical retribution; and with the development in human society of a feeling for ethical values the transition was readily accomplished. But it is admittedly difficult to determine the exact point in the development of religion when ideas of a future life begin to assume a definitely ethical colouring. Dr. Tylor has warned us that when such ideas appear among savage races, they may be due to foreign influence, Christian or Mohammedan. Without, however, denying that the lower culture may exhibit the beginnings of a movement in the ethical direction, it is plainly only at the stage of national religion that the conception of retribution in the life hereafter attains to prominence. The belief that rewards and punishments are to be administered after death led to a division of the

other world into two regions, the place of tribulation and the place of happy existence. In heaven the good were rewarded with blessedness, in hell the wicked were punished for their misdeeds. In ancient Egypt, India, Greece, and Persia the conception of rewards and punishments after death had a definite place in the national religion. Thus in Greek religion we have descriptions of the appearance of the soul before the judgment-seat of Minos and Rhadamanthus, and we hear of Elysium, which is the reward of the good, and of Tartarus, which is the doom of the wicked. With the Egyptians the notion of future judgment was of high importance. The Book of the Dead narrates how the soul of the departed is led by Anubis into the judgment-hall of Osiris, the god of the underworld, where his confession is made and the heart is weighed by Thoth in a balance, while around sit forty-two deities to hear sentence pronounced. If we turn to India we find in the Vedic hymns the notion of future rewards and punishments is already clearly developed. The oldest hymns of the Rig Veda reveal a faith in an existence after death. This existence is regarded as a boon bestowed by the gods on those who had carefully performed the rites of religion, for example, on those who had drunk the Soma, had made the sacrifices, and given duly to the priests. The later Vedas show the

belief taking a more speculative and priestly turn. In the Vedic hymns the contrast between the fate of souls hereafter is vividly drawn: the endless happiness of the good in heaven is set over against the misery of the lawless and impious who are cast into the abyss. As yet the idea of transmigration, with its gloomy circle of change—an idea which dominated later Hindu thought—is conspicuously absent. The Vedic representation of the places of blessedness and tribulation is markedly crude and sensuous, a feature which is also notable in more developed religions. In Egypt, for instance, the conception of the future life is still in terms of sensuous pain and sensuous pleasure; and the same is true of so late a religion as the Mohammedan. The picture of the Moslem paradise and its joys is as crude in its appeal to the senses as the descriptions of the Vedas. And when sensuous elements thus dominate the conception of the life to come, it is plain that the ethical aspects of retribution must remain in the background.

The ethical side of the doctrine of retribution develops slowly, and even at a relatively high stage of religion the future life may not be connected with the present in an intimate and organic way. When a teleological conception of the relation of the one to the other is lacking, the rewards and punishments in the world after death will be

external and arbitrary rather than inward and ethical. This appears clearly enough in the Egyptian religion. The ancient Egyptian was concerned with the fate of the individual in the world to come; and here he offered a contrast to the Chinaman, who looked to the spirits of his ancestors in the past rather than to a personal destiny in the future. In Egypt there grew up a body of usages which related to the life after death; and the idea, so prevalent in the lower culture, survived, that the souls of the dead are exposed to many dangers. But these observances were largely magical in their meaning, and the growth of magic in a religion is always hostile to the ethical spirit. Despite the great mass of burial customs and rites bearing on the life after death, which are so noteworthy a feature of Egyptian religion, it cannot be said that the individual was much influenced in his daily conduct by the thought of the future life. He trusted a good deal to the magical efficiency of the traditional rites to preserve his soul from harm after death; but when these were performed, he turned with a cheerful mind to enjoy this world and make the most of it. No more than the worldly European to-day was he the haunt of gloomy anxieties and fears about the future, and his daily life was little affected by the traditional beliefs about the hereafter.

If we turn to the Mystery Religions which were already prominent in Greece in the sixth century B.C., we find they had a contribution to make to the idea of immortality; but they did little to infuse into it an ethical meaning. The Orphic Mysteries were the form into which the Greek spirit fashioned the Thracian cult of Dionysus. In that rude cult the participants devoured the raw flesh of the sacrificial animals, and were deemed to be possessed by the god and to enter into his life. During the sacred 'ecstasy' the soul was united to the deity and freed from the prison of the body. The Greek genius purified this worship from some of its cruder elements, and gave it a more elevated form. The Orphic Mysteries laid stress on the idea that the initiated in the sacred ceremonies entered into the immortal life of the deity. The ecstatic experiences of the cult of Dionysus had given vigour to the belief in a life of the soul independent of the body. Out of this grew the idea of the survival of the soul after death, and this in turn developed into a faith in its divine and indestructible life. The mystic union of the soul with the god was the witness of its divine powers and its immortal nature.

The Eleusinian Mysteries were related to the Orphic religion, but they contributed in a somewhat different way to the doctrine of immortality. They had a value, as compared with Orphicism,

in giving a certain definiteness to the thought of the life after death, and they connected it with the observance of religious rites. The participants in the Mysteries, which had their sanctuary at Eleusis near Athens, were members of a religious society into which they had been initiated. The religious ideas contained in the Mysteries were based on the cult of the deities of the earth, more especially on that of Demeter and her daughter Kore. The myth of the maiden carried off to the dark underworld, her winter sojourn there, the distracted quest of the sorrowing mother, and the glad reunion of mother and child, all this was a parable of the death and rebirth of nature. And upon this parable was based the idea of a new life of the soul arising triumphant out of death. The centre of the mystery was not the communication of a secret doctrine: it was a scenic representation or a dramatic action founded on the story of Demeter and Kore. To the faithful celebrants of the mystery a happy immortality was promised. Underlying the ceremony of initiation was the thought, that a certain process of purification was necessary ere the candidate could enter into the blessed life; and these rites of purification preceded and accompanied the sacred festival. To all purified ones a privileged destiny after death was promised, from which the unconsecrated were excluded.

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One can hardly say, however, that the Mysteries of Eleusis taught the principle of ethical retribution in the world to come. No doubt the fate of the soul depended on rites of purification on the part of the initiated. But initiation was practically open to all without test of character, and the significance of the rites was magical rather than moral. The Mysteries did not establish an ethical connexion between man's life here and his fate hereafter, nor did they proceed on the assumption that such a connexion existed. Hence the saying attributed to Diogenes the Cynic: "Pataikon the thief will have a better fate after death than Agesilaus or Epaminondas, because he has been initiated at Eleusis." In fact the religion of the Mysteries seems to have shared the defect of the Egyptian religion: it did not shake itself free of the belief in the magical efficacy of ritual observances. In both religions people hoped for blessedness in the life to come who were frankly worldly in this life. Yet the Mysteries had a value. They taught that a happy destiny was possible after death, and that apart from distinctions of rank and culture; and they recognised the claim of the individual to a personal immortality. But they did not lift the conception to the ethical level, nor set the future life in a spiritual relation to the present.

In truth, it is to Persia rather than to the

popular religion of Greece that we must look for a definite development of the doctrine of ethical retribution in the world to come.* From the time of Zoroaster† the doctrine of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked after death formed an integral part of Mazdeism. And despite the enormous development of religious ritualism in the Vendidad, the perception of moral values was not lost. The conflict of the kingdom of light with the kingdom of darkness was a moral conflict; and it is righteousness of life, as well as faithfulness in ritual observance, which gives the soul its place in the kingdom of Ahura Mazda. The soul that wins its way to heaven is the soul of the man who entered on the right side into that war of good against evil which runs through all nature and life. In this way Mazdeism made a contribution to that teleological conception of the relation of the life hereafter to the life here which is necessary to an ethical view of immortality. In this respect the religion of Persia marks a definite advance, even though the vision of another world was not wholly purged of sensuous elements.

Before we consider, however, how the movement initiated by Mazdeism historically received a higher development, it is necessary to examine another mode in which the idea of a future life was worked out. That mode was a fateful one,

* Gk form of old Iranian name Zarathustra (Menzies p 385). Some authorities say a mythical person; if he did live, it was c. 1400

† "They" [the Aryans] "were less given to speculation & more to a robust morality than their Indian kinsmen" [Menzies, p. 381]

and it was decidedly unfavourable to the growth of the ethical element. I refer to the doctrine of Metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls.

The notion of Transmigration, although it came to play a great part in certain developed religions, has its roots in the lower culture, and goes back to primitive ideas of the soul. Among primitive races the soul, as we have seen, was a rarefied copy of the individual, a shadow image, less tangible than the body but still material. The soul thus conceived could leave the body, and was thought to survive death. After the analogy of his own experience, primitive man attributed a soul to animals and even to inanimate things. From this animistic scheme it was not hard to evolve the notion of metempsychosis. For we know already that the soul, to savage man, was not the self in our sense of the word; and the survival of the soul did not mean the survival of personality. The soul was the essence or shadowy image of the man; and it could detach itself from him and flit about on its own account. Souls were subtle and elusive things, and rude peoples had no difficulty in believing they entered into other men after their original owners had died. The resemblance of children to parents and kinsfolk naturally suggested the idea that the souls of the elders had migrated into their descendants, and so were reincarnated on earth.

But the crude psychology of savage races made it possible to give a wider scope to the doctrine of Transmigration. The souls of the dead might enter not only into other men, but also into animals. In truth, the savage drew no hard and fast line of distinction such as we do between the psychical life of men and of animals; and even plants and stones were not beings alien to him, but were the abode of spirits. For the savage, therefore, it was neither absurd nor contradictory that the soul of a dead man should migrate into an animal and take up its abode in it. Many acts and customs obtaining in the lower culture show conclusively that the savage treats the animal as possessing an intelligence like his own. The North American redskin will argue with his horse, and ask the pardon of the bear he is about to kill. Similarly the Samoyeds excuse themselves to the bear they have slain; and the Kaffirs, when hunting the elephant, will beg the animal not to tread on them and kill them. Further instances could easily be given.[1] All the evidence goes to show that the chasm between the human and animal intelligence which exists for us, did not exist for our primitive ancestors. Given these conditions, it was as easy for low races to suppose the souls of the dead entered into animals as it was for them to believe they passed into infants

[1] On this point *vide* Tylor, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 467 ff.

or other men. The belief that the souls of the dead come back in newly born children is very common, but the savage is as ready to believe they can pass into birds, fishes, or bears. Sometimes the quality of the dead was marked by the animal into which their souls passed. According to Tylor, the Icannas of Brazil say that the souls of the brave pass into beautiful birds, while those of cowards enter into reptiles. The Maravi of Africa think that bad men become jackals and good men snakes.[1]

The well-known principle of survivals in culture leads us to expect that ideas of transmigration should recur after civilisation had taken the place of savagery. It is well known, for example, that metempsychosis was a current idea in the Orphic Mysteries in Greece. The orgia or sacramental mysteries, to celebrate which the Orphics were banded into religious communities, had for their object the deliverance of the soul from the process of transmigration by a process of purification.[2] And from Orphicism the doctrine found its way among the Pythagorean brotherhood and appeared in philosophy. We are justified in thinking that Pythagoras himself taught the kinship of men and animals, and the Pythagorean order practised 'purifications' that were meant to deliver the soul

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii. pp. 7–8.
[2] *Vide* Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 88.

from the circle of change after death. These purifications were a refinement of those used by the Orphics. That the soul changed into animal forms was a belief attributed to Pythagoras by Porphyry; and this is one of the few things we are reasonably sure Pythagoras did hold. Similar doctrines were taught afterwards by Empedocles, who believed in the kinship of men and animals, and affirmed that in the process of change set up by the four elements he had been at different times a plant, a bird, and a fish, as well as a youth and a maiden.[1]

But the most significant and far-reaching development of the doctrine of Transmigration was found, not in Greece, but in India. Among the Greeks, metempsychosis was an esoteric creed rather than a popular faith: in India it became an integral part of Hindu religion. Greek and Hindu teaching on this subject were independent developments: the similarities can be explained by the common stratum of primitive beliefs out of which both were evolved.

We have noted that the earliest phase of Hindu thought—that represented by the Vedic hymns—contains no doctrine of transmigration. The hymns know nothing of the dreary circle of birth and death to which the soul is condemned, and the outlook on the future is cheerful and hopeful.

c. 1500 (Thomas)

[1] *Vide* Ritter and Preller, 8th ed., par. 182.

Exactly when and how the doctrine arose we do not know. In the Brahmanas the power which determines the life to come is that of the sacrifices, and the highest reward which can come to the soul is that of union with Brahma or some other deity. But in the Upanishads and the Laws of Manu* the idea of transmigration is dominant; and even in the earlier Upanishads the form of the doctrine is already complete. The belief in metempsychosis, when once it had entered into Hindu religion, does not seem to have been doubted or denied, and its influence was pervasive and fateful. Behind the doctrine lay the conception of the eternity of the human soul as part of the universal soul, and the 'wheel of change' on which the soul was bound gave vivid imaginative expression to the principle of retribution. What is characteristic of the Upanishads is the specific way in which they construe the idea of retribution. In the more elementary form of the transmigration-theory, the fate of the soul was a reward or punishment in kind for deeds done in the body. But Hindu thought went deeper than the notion of a mechanical equivalent: it found that the inner character and disposition which a man had in one form of his existence was the determining cause of his condition in another form. Hence the saying: "Man is wholly made up of desire; as is his desire so is his insight, as

is his insight so are his deeds (Karman); according to his deeds so is his destiny." This inner chain of causality linked man's life here to a previous existence, and it will go to fix his future form of being. Retribution on this view is not a divine Providence, but a principle inherent in the structure of the universe. In the endless process of birth and death to which souls were subject the spiritual law of things was realised. As has been justly said: "This belief in an endless series of lives upon each of which man entered laden with the deeds of his previous life gave to the problem of salvation in India a new meaning and a new urgency." [1] The deliverance man sought in religion was a deliverance from the continuous succession of lives, from the dreary and monotonous circle of change. The message of the Upanishads is that this consummation is achieved by knowledge, the saving knowledge that the soul is one with Brahman. In the light of this higher knowledge the illusion of individuality fades away, and the spirit reaches the haven of rest and peace in conscious identity with the Absolute.

The same thought of a redemption of man attained by higher insight is part of the teaching of Buddha. But Buddhism carried scepticism farther than Brahmanism, and approaches nihilism

c. 500 B.C.

[1] G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i. p. 276.

in denying the existence of any identical self or soul. On this principle there could, if we speak strictly, be no transmigration of the soul, for there was no permanent self or substance anywhere. Yet Buddha, whatever we may think of his consistency, accepted the principle of rebirth, but reduced the process to Karma, the continuity not of a self, but of an impersonal law, the law, namely, of the perpetuity of the consequences of action. The deeds done in a former state of existence determine the individual's present state of being, while the present goes to shape the future. And yet, strange to say, there is no persisting self to link together the phases of this causal series and constitute them the history of a soul.

The Buddhist goal is the extinction of all desire, even the desire for a future life. This passionless end of all striving is Nirvana, a state not of absolute nothingness, but not to be described in positive terms. It is something ineffable. Man goes

> "Unto Nirvana. He is one with life,
> Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.
> *Om, Mani padme om!* the dewdrop slips
> Into the shining sea."

The Buddhist Nirvana is the extinction of every desire and interest which stir the surface of life. The ideal of the Brahman does not reach

the same pitch of negation: it is the absorption of the individual soul in the universal soul. In neither case have we immortality in the personal and ethical sense. For the Brahman true knowledge destroys the illusion of separate individuality: for the Buddhist who has been enlightened the self or soul does not exist.

The way in which the Indian mind worked out the idea of metempsychosis is extremely significant. The idea is not one which lends itself to a spiritual and hopeful view of human life and destiny, and in Hindu thought the principle assumed a pessimistic and fatalistic form. This is markedly so in Buddhism. Popular Buddhism no doubt had its crude pictures of the joys of heaven as well as the sufferings of hell; but the system in its essential nature is pessimistic. And in general we may say that the best the Hindu hoped for was a negative rather than a positive good—deliverance from the wheel of change. The doom of the soul is to carry forward into the future its legacy from the past, for it was caught in the toils of a process it could not control. The Hindu had only a feeble conception of the worth of personality; and, in our eyes at least, his ideal was the dissolution rather than the conservation of personal values. Transmigration in itself is an arbitrary and fatalistic scheme; and it is not surprising that for the Hindu it became a gloomy

obsession. The best man could hope for was liberation from the wheel of change: neither Hinduism nor Buddhism was able to set forth a positive and personal ideal to inspire human endeavour.

And here, I think, we touch the fundamental difficulty presented by metempsychosis as a theory of the destiny of the soul. It links the future of the soul in a mechanical way with the past and the present; consequently it can set before the individual no worthy object of effort in virtue of which he might share in the achievement of his goal. It is no accident that the doctrine of transmigration should be associated with a pessimistic fatalism; and the conclusion is irresistible, that not in this direction can the soul pass to a true realisation and fulfilment of itself. If the life after death is to be a source of hope and stimulus, it must be differently conceived.

The growing spiritual life of mankind could win no adequate satisfaction for itself in metempsychosis; so it had to seek a solution of its problem in some form of the doctrine of continuance or personal survival. The question is as to the nature of the continuance. Now neither mere persistence of being, nor a state of being after death which is arbitrarily or mechanically related to the present existence, gives scope for an ethical

conception of immortality. As the religious consciousness developed, it gained a deeper perception of the importance of personal values; and hence its demand that the conception of immortality should have an ethical content. The demand, as we have pointed out, was realised through the establishment of a teleological or organic relation between the present state of being and the state after death. This implies that the future life is conceived as the goal and fulfilment of this life, the end which is immanent in it from the first. Dim anticipations of this idea can be traced in the lower culture,—in the thought, for instance, that the future life will be one in which the values on which men set most store here will be realised. The North American Indians, who delighted in the chase, looked forward to the Happy Hunting Grounds after death; the Norsemen, a race of warriors, had a warriors' paradise in Valhalla; while the Greeks, imbued with the joy of life, drew an imaginative picture of the Happy Islands, the home of departed spirits. The sensuous element pervades these visions of the future world; but they were purified and ennobled as men gained a truer conception of values, a better knowledge of the goods which are really important. When they came to recognise that the material ranks far below the ethical and spiritual, they were able to conceive the world to come in terms

of ethical and spiritual fulfilment. After this gain was achieved, faith in immortality could become an uplifting influence on life here and now.

A spiritual faith in immortality, when its implications are thought out, is seen to involve a personal and a social factor. Immortality must mean the fulfilment of personal life, for on personality the maintenance of values depends. But personality, we have seen reason to conclude, involves manifold relations to other selves; and, apart from a social system as an environment, personal development is not possible. In thinking, therefore, of immortality as the goal and fulfilment of personal life, we realise that it is hard to conceive of this without a social fulfilment. The personal factor seems to fail of completion apart from the social: a perfection of the one without the other appears to be an abstraction. If society is a means to personal development, the social good is also an end of personal endeavour.

That we are dealing with a matter of vital importance is proved by the prominence given to the subject in the highest and most spiritual religion. It is a feature of Christianity that it represented the human goal as at once personal and social: the realisation of personal good in the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom, which is

manifested in the world of sense and time, attains a partial realisation here, and points to the world to come for its completion. The single soul achieves the fulfilment of its divine end in and through the society of redeemed souls, and the social consummation becomes in its turn an end for the individual. Through this true union of individual and social good the conception of the world Beyond is set in a relation to this world which is at once intimate, vital, and ethical. In and through his temporal duties and relations man is invited to move forward to the full realisation of his divine vocation as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. The goal to which he strives is a personality completed and fulfilled, not submerged or absorbed. The ideal, though personal, is not selfish; for the good sought is at once social and personal; it is a transfigured personal life in a transfigured social order.

Deeply interesting and important is the problem of the meaning of this spiritual development in which man, despite many wanderings, has come to a larger view of the issues of his life and the scope of his destiny. Without entering on the question of ultimate truth at present, we may point out that the growth of this specific doctrine keeps pace, to speak broadly, with the growth of the religious consciousness as a whole: as man's religion develops, so does his idea of his own

ultimate destiny. The development of religion is, in general terms, a movement from the sensuous to the spiritual, and from a mundane to a supramundane goal. Lower races set store on outward and material values, but, as civilisation advances, men see with growing clearness that inward and spiritual values are more important. Thus the conception of what man desires in immortality, what he hopes to realise through it, is elevated and spiritualised. The human Paradise, with its crude representations and sensuous joys, silently yields to the thought of a perfected personal life in a social order in which goodness reigns supreme. We may well believe that it was no casual and haphazard process by which man gradually became conscious of spiritual powers and a spiritual destiny. In the evolution of the conception of immortality we mark the progressive statement of a claim on man's part, of a demand that he makes on the universe within which he has come to birth. In substance this claim is an affirmation, that a human personality possesses an inner worth which ought to save it from the common doom of mortality. Endowed with spiritual capacities which cannot ripen to their harvest under earthly skies, the soul demands the scope for their fruition in "a better country, even the heavenly." And it is at least a thought to ponder carefully, that this is something more than

a casual and fugitive desire or a fond imagination. May not this growing vision be a part of a development, divinely ordered, in which man has gradually come to know the meaning of his life and the greatness of his destiny?

CHAPTER III

SCIENCE AND THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY

DURING last century the Natural Sciences, with their manifold and varied achievements, filled a large place in the thought of the age. They seemed to have conferred so many benefits on mankind, and to have dissipated so many ancient prejudices, that it appeared plausible to expect them to do even more than they had done. There were not wanting those who believed that these sciences, with their accurate methods, would cast light on the origin and destiny of man. About the middle of the nineteenth century a wave of materialism swept over the land, and some were rash enough to claim that in matter were the promise and potency of mind itself. The hypothesis was admittedly a bold one, yet how many bold hypotheses had turned out true! But the intervening years have not brought the fulfilment of these sanguine expectations, and materialism as a creed has declined in prestige. Nevertheless there is still much faith in the

Sciences of Nature; for they appear to yield precise and verifiable results, while speculative thought seems to move in a nebulous region where nothing can be proved. Hence it was to be expected that the question would be put: What have the sciences to say on the problem of immortality? Can they furnish any evidence that it is certain or even probable? Or can they give any proof that it is impossible?

The answer, as I think we shall find in the course of the discussion, will be, that neither in the positive nor in the negative direction can the sciences offer us proof in the proper meaning of the word. If they do not lend support to faith in immortality, neither do they demonstrate that such a faith is illegitimate. For the Natural Sciences deal with the world of experience at a level on which the principles that only can decide the issue do not come under review. This conclusion is now endorsed by some, if not by all, men of science. Were the standpoint of scientists the only standpoint, there would be much to be said for the verdict of one of them: *ignoramus et ignorabimus.*

It is not inconsistent with this that the sciences of nature do show us that a kind of immortality is not merely possible but is a fact. Biology has proved that there are low-grade organisms which never die in the ordinary signification of the term.

For of these organisms you cannot say that there was a time in their history when they definitely ceased to exist as individuals. When they reach a certain point in their growth they begin to throw off by fissure portions of themselves, and the parts detached continue the process of growth and subsequent multiplication by division. Here death as the disintegration of the parent organism does not intervene; and if the absence of death is immortality, here is immortality of a sort. On the other hand, there is no persistence of the organism as a complex of elements which maintains its identity through a series of changes. What we have is the indefinite continuance of an organic material rather than the survival of a true individual. Nor is there anything in these facts to suggest that a multicellular organism can survive as an individual the change produced by death.

The biological study of the process of evolution does, however, bring out significant facts. It has clearly shown that life on earth is a continuous development from lower to higher forms—a development in which each fresh stage of advance is a basis and a preparation for a further stage. The process is a movement from a simple to a complex unity, from a slenderly to a highly differentiated whole. Moreover, it is made plain that organisms are not carried forward in this

development by some mechanical propulsion or *vis a tergo.* Individuals which develop take an active part in their own development. All living things react on stimulus in ways that tend to conserve life, and they selectively appropriate from their environment those elements which are necessary to their life. And as organisms become more complex, and organs and their functions more highly specialised, this purposive activity becomes increasingly apparent. For with this outward development goes an increasing development of inner or psychical activity. The sentient and instinctive life blossoms into conscious life, and this in turn reaches its consummation in the reflective thinking and deliberate will of man. The study of evolution from the scientific standpoint suggests that in man, a being 'of large discourse' looking before and after, we see the culmination of the whole developmental process. The thought lies to hand, that a being who is the issue of nature's travail through untold ages, is the heir to a larger destiny than the lower creatures. May it not be that man, who transcends nature and in whom the light of reason shines, rises superior to the doom of mortality? Some men of science have felt the urgency of the claim, and a few have been inclined to regard man's place in the scale of evolution as an argument for his immortality. But from a logical

point of view the argument is defective: there is more in the conclusion than is contained in the premises. Science gives us no cognisance of the existence of elements in man which guarantee his survival after death. Those scientists who affirm the immortality of man do so on grounds which are not strictly scientific. They have supposed, for example, that divine and spiritual elements entered into the evolutionary process at the time when man began to be, and in their presence they have found the assurance of a future life. Thus Le Conte and Alfred Russell Wallace affirm that at a point in development there was an influx of the Divine, which formed the soul of man. This is a hypothesis which may or may not be true, but it cannot be justified by a purely scientific investigation. We cannot say the theory is absolutely necessary to explain the scientific facts of evolution. To the critical and scientific eye the phenomena of human development yield no conclusive argument that man is destined to outlive this earthly experience, and maintain his individuality after death has dissolved his material body. We go further than the facts warrant if we draw the optimistic inference of a recent writer: "Evolution leads straight to immortality or it leads nowhere."[1] At most the truth that man is the crown of a long evolutionary process

[1] Holmes, *Is Death the End?* 1915, p. 137.

will suggest the hope that he is a centre of value for whom some better thing is reserved hereafter.

But though science can give no positive proof that man is immortal, there are theories put forward in the name of science which, if true, would preclude any hope of immortality. I refer, of course, to those forms of naturalism and materialism which seek to construe the life and mind of man as the product of lower forces. If spirit or mind is generated by a particular combination of material elements, it cannot be independent of them and must perish when they dissolve. If "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile," the term of the brain's existence must be the term of the existence of the mind. A perishable cause can only engender a perishable effect. It is not, however, common to state the relation of mind and matter in so crude and dogmatic a manner. Biologists and physiologists are usually content to emphasise the dependence of human thought and will on the functional activity of the bodily organism. The body is the condition of the mind; and mental processes seem to disappear whenever physiological processes cease. What likelihood is there that mental life persists when the body, its structural basis, is dissolved? To those who contend that the soul is an independent centre of life, the reply of the materialistically inclined man of science is,

that this talk about the reality of the soul is an instance of the old vice of hypostatising abstractions. We know nothing but the changing current of our feelings and ideas. Formerly people spoke of 'faculties' and 'powers,' foolishly believing that empty words made things clearer; and it was a common practice to postulate a *vis occulta* to explain what was unintelligible. This bad habit still exists when men should know better, and the fashion of speaking of the soul is an illustration. What assurance have we that any reality corresponds to the word? All we know in experience is a fleeting series of mental phenomena which are indissolubly linked to certain cerebral processes.

So the materialistic argument runs. It is only superficially plausible, and it will not bear close examination. If you consider dispassionately whether thought can be the outcome of mechanical movements, you realise that between the latter and the former a great gulf is fixed. To speak of matter as the cause of mind is really an absurdity. To say that thoughts are just movements in the brain is meaningless; for thought is thought and movement is movement, and to identify the one with the other is nonsense. Radical materialists who hold that matter generates mind are inconsistent: professing to explain mind they set out from a material basis which is only intelligible in terms of mind. Thus they

secretly assume what they pretend to deduce. Materialism is thus involved in a vicious circle; and there is consequently a growing recognition that it is a hopeless task to try to derive mind from something other than itself.[1]

But while dogmatic materialism of the kind described is now rare, there is still a decided tendency to correlate the mental with the material order: in other words, to try to establish a rigid correspondence between mind-process and brain-process. Granted that matter does not produce mind, but neither does mind produce matter. Nevertheless the mental and the physical series run parallel: each mental fact has for its correlate a definite brain-process; and the mind or soul, if it is not the effect, is at least an accompanying phenomenon. It is the constant shadow, as it were, of cerebral changes. To use a common phrase, mind or soul is an *epiphenomenon.* While this theory avoids the error of a gross materialism —it refrains from saying that matter makes mind —it does not concede to the spiritual element in man any supremacy, or admit any principle of spontaneity. Though brain changes do not produce thoughts, yet the mental series is a

[1] "Men of ability have maintained that what I call matter is nothing but my thoughts and sensations, and, at the same time, that my thoughts and sensations are nothing but an activity of my brain, which being matter, will itself be thoughts and sensations!" —McTaggart, *Human Immortality and Pre-Existence*, p. 51.

strictly ordered reflexion of the physiological series: the two correspond point by point.

This conception of psycho-physical parallelism leaves it a mystery why each element in the psychical series should have an exact counterpart in the physical series. Such a co-ordination is unintelligible unless the separation is not absolute —in other words, unless the difference runs back to some ultimate common ground. In that case we may revert to some such idea as that of Spinoza, and postulate an identical substance which is revealed in two contrasted aspects.

But if we take the parallelistic theory as an explanation of experience, it leads inevitably to the conclusion that consciousness is an epiphenomenon: consciousness, in other words, accompanies physiological processes in the brain, but is void of any useful purpose. It is not active on its own account. It has no dynamic influence on the series of events; it is no more than a passive reflexion of an order which it has no share in determining.

Were this theory valid, it would be futile to contend for the immortality of the soul. The mind would be so essentially correlated with the physical series of events that to speak of its independent life would be absurd, and to expect it should survive the disintegration of the body would be foolish. Indeed, on this view, it is more

than doubtful that we are entitled to speak of the soul at all; for the psychical series, the series of ideas, is all that can claim to exist, and how this series could form the living unity and directive power we call the mind is by no means evident. To say with Spinoza that 'the idea of the mind' is 'the idea of the human body,' is not to explain how the multiplicity of externally related corporeal elements should have as counterpart the spiritual unity of the self. And the spontaneity and activity which are features of the soul's life are not compatible with the theory that the mental series must rigidly conform to the physical. But a psychical life which excludes activity and spontaneity has no room for a real self as a unifying principle. The self must be a fiction, and equally fictitious will be the idea that the will can carry out its purposes into the objective world. For between the inner and outer worlds all interaction is *ex hypothesi* impossible. As a provisional point of view or a rough working idea psycho-physical parallelism may be useful in psychology; if it is converted into an ultimate metaphysical theory it will not work, and it breaks down before plain facts of experience. An argument against immortality which is based on psycho-physical parallelism as a final truth is therefore invalid.

But it may be objected: Is there not clear

evidence that mental processes always presuppose brain processes? Let it be granted that, if the brain does not function properly, the activity of the mind is affected thereby. If there is a lesion in the brain, if it is affected by drugs, if it receives an inadequate blood supply, then the defective functioning of the cerebral centres which ensues induces a corresponding defect in the mental processes. These are facts which are not in dispute. But, as we have already said, we are not concerned to deny that there is a general correlation of cerebral and mental processes; it is only when this working view is turned into an absolute metaphysical statement that we demur. For before you can take this step it is essential that you should make plain what you mean by matter. And when you try to do this, it will be seen that the assumption is an uncritical one that the physical processes have, *qua* physical, an independent reality of their own. At present we know them in experience only in terms of mind, and we are not entitled to say that they are, apart from mind, just what they are for mind. To say that certain experiences which we call material elements would be just the same if they were not experiences at all, is an obvious fallacy. It is possible, or even probable, that a theory of reality will yield the conclusion that there is no such thing as dead matter, in fact, that what we

call matter approximates to the nature of mind. If this be true, the opposition of the physical and mental is only apparent: it is not ultimate. There is at any rate no warrant for setting the one over against the other in a dualistic fashion: systematic reflexion leads to the conclusion that the difference is relative, not absolute.

It is from this standpoint that we should meet the argument which is based on the apparent dependence of mind on the structure of the brain. That the development of the mind broadly corresponds to the development of the brain is a generally accepted principle. In the series of animal forms we find that increasing intelligence is matched by increasing size and organisation of the brain structure; as psychical activity increases there is an increasing complexity of the higher cerebral centres. In the case of man, whose intelligence so greatly transcends that of the lower animals, the difference in brain capacity is very marked. We have here a body of facts which no one dreams of denying. But in this instance everything turns on the interpretation of the facts, on the meaning that is read into them. To construe the relation as one of causal dependence of mind on brain, would, in the light of what has been said, be quite unwarranted. For the argument assumes the priority and independence of matter, and this is a false abstraction. We

should assume much less, and our argument would be better founded, were we to interpret the relationship in the opposite way, and to affirm that mind is the reality and brain its reflexion. In other words, we may hold that this is an instance of function determining structure; for it is the developing mind which fashions for itself an increasingly articulated instrument in the brain, not the growing brain which generates an enhanced psychical activity. To put it briefly, brain is the shadow of mind rather than mind the shadow of brain. This conclusion will no doubt not commend itself to some, but the general principle hardly admits of controversy. I mean the principle that the correlation of the mental and material depends for its ultimate significance on a metaphysical theory of reality.

One reason for the favour with which psychophysical parallelism has been received is the apparently insuperable difficulty of conceiving how mind and matter can act on one another. Between realities so disparate interaction appears to be inexplicable. It seems easy to understand how a moving ball can set another ball in motion, but it is not intelligible how a change in the brain should result in an idea, and how an idea in turn should produce a change in the brain.

To this difficulty we may reply by emphasising the statement already made: the difference

between the mental and material may not be so great as ordinary thought takes it to be. But, apart from this, it is a mistake to suppose that the interaction of mind and matter is a hard conception, while the interaction of things is an easy one. In point of fact the latter idea, under close analysis, is found to be extremely perplexing: to explain the passage of a force from one material object to another becomes baffling, when we try to think the problem out. In this reference a statement of Lotze, who bestowed much attention on this question, is worth quoting. "The kernel of this error is always that we believe ourselves to possess a knowledge of the nature of the action of one thing on another which we not only do not possess, but which is in itself impossible, and that we then regard the relation between matter and soul as an exceptional case, and are astonished to find ourselves lacking in all knowledge of the nature of their interaction."[1] The argument for parallelism has no doubt been strengthened by the prejudice that interaction between things is simple and easy to understand. Lotze's severely reasoned argument is a salutary antidote to an uncritical way of regarding the subject. It ought to convince us that the question of interaction in any form is obscure and perplexing.

[1] *Medizinische Psychologie*, as quoted by McDougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 207.

At this point in our discussion it is relevant to ask, whether the facts of biology do not require us to postulate a soul or principle of unity in organic life. If it is possible to construe the phenomena of life without an inner and purposive principle, then the case for an organising cause or soul will be seriously weakened. Unless we have ground for accepting the existence of the soul as a constitutive principle within the body, the plea for the survival of the self after death can have no cogency. A soul which was the outcome of corporeal conditions could not outlast these conditions.

In entering on this question the main point on which we must be clear is this: Can the facts of organic life be explained mechanically? Can they be interpreted adequately in terms of quantitative action and reaction? If so, the naturalistic thinker will be able to present a better case for the treatment of mind in the same way—better, not in the sense that he will manage to show that mind is reducible to mechanical principles, but he will be able to suggest more plausibly that, though a complete proof of this cannot be given, still it is likely that this is the truth of the matter. For it is probable, he will argue, that the same principles are at work in mental as in biological phenomena. In these circumstances it is important to show that not even the behaviour of the lower organisms

can be successfully interpreted by purely mechanical categories.

It will serve to disprove the adequacy of the mechanical explanation, if it can be made plain that we are driven to postulate some inner and purposive character in the acting even of the humbler living creatures. A substantial body of facts appears to point to the need of making a postulate of this kind. Thus the behaviour of the lowest grade organisms, such as the amœba, is not intelligible as merely mechanical responses or pure reflexes. For it bears a definitely forward looking character: it is steadily directed to life-conservation. No living thing, however humble, but can select from its environment what is helpful to it and reject what is hurtful: its survival depends on this. If it finds itself in an unfavourable situation, it will strive to counteract so far as it can the influences which are hostile to it. Certain animals defend themselves against enemies and manage to secure their prey by the fact that they are coloured like their natural surroundings; and they will respond to a change in the colour of their environment by a further change in their own colouring. Again, in particular animals, some reptiles, for instance, there is a capacity for replacing lost parts, say a foot or a tail, in the interests of the organism. To a certain extent living creatures can react against a poison

absorbed into the system and neutralise its effects. Once more, there is a mass of facts in connexion with the reproduction of the species, involving methods of fertilisation, preparation for the young, and their nourishment and protection, which defy any mechanical explanation. Such actings can only be interpreted in the light of final ends: they cannot be construed as mere effects. So familiar a story as the way in which a creature conceals itself from its prey, stealthily approaches it, suddenly springs upon it, strikes it in a vital place, and then proceeds to devour it, spells purposive action or it becomes hopelessly unintelligible. In these cases, and in many others of the same order, we appear to be confronted by the fact that the animal deals with different situations in a *purposive* way, and does not simply react on stimulus in a *stereotyped* way. It acts as a unity, and its behaviour is always in the interests of its own life and that of the species. That is to say, behaviour in many instances is quite meaningless unless we regard it as regulated from within, and directed towards the future. We make a mystery of it if we suppose it is the mechanical result of what has gone before. In the lowest beings this purposive element is present, and as we ascend the scale of life it is more and more conspicuously operative. A *vis a tergo* will not account for some of the most patent actings

of animals, or the selective interest which they uniformly and consistently display. Such facts compel us to credit the organism with a power of purposive adaptation to ends which go beyond the immediate present.

Our conclusion therefore is, that a living being acts as a whole and in its interests as a whole. If the organism functions as a purposive unity in this fashion, it is inconceivable that it should be nothing more than a mechanically interacting system. In the conception of a whole making itself felt in all its parts, and subordinating them to an end, we are obviously positing a spiritual and not a mechanical principle. The type of unity is of a higher order than mechanism, for it brings the parts into an intimacy of connexion, into a sympathetic *rapport*, which no mechanical causality could produce. This unity therefore presupposes a unifying principle ; and this unifying principle corresponds to what, on the human level, we call the soul. In presence of the facts so understood, the soul is not a superfluity but a necessity.

But if the facts of biology point to some immanent principle of unity in organisms which works purposively, the need of such a principle is even more striking when we come to consider the phenomena of conscious experience. It is impossible to question the truth that man appears to

himself as a unity, and is aware of his identity in all the multiplicity of his experiences. He recognises the succession of temporal experiences as his own, and he feels himself to be present in them. As we have noted, it is not explicable how the body as a group of separate parts in space could generate this unity of consciousness. To point out that memory is to some extent conditioned by cerebral processes is justifiable, and the fact will be generally admitted. But to do this comes far short of proving that these conditions are adequate to explain that identity of the self in its changing states without which memory could not function. The notion that memory somehow arises out of the traces which our mental experiences leave on the structure of the brain is not a feasible one; for to work at all memory postulates an already existing self in order to link these experiences together and to refer them to itself as a unitary consciousness. To put it shortly: the soul or self cannot be developed in the manner of a chemical compound, for example, out of an association of mental states, since these states of themselves have no developmental capacity. They are only associated and developed inasmuch as the self is present in them and develops itself through them. In this connexion Lotze has argued cogently, that the fact that we appear to ourselves as subject is a clear evidence

of the soul's unity. Once we have grasped the significance of this experience, the attempt from the side of physiology to connect the unity of the soul with some unitary organ in the body is seen to be a useless piece of ingenuity. As a matter of fact there is no such single point in the brain, a point to which all the sensory paths converge, which could act as a *sensorium commune*. And even if there were, one cannot see how it could explain that very different reality, the unity of soul-life.

Dr. McDougall, in his recent work on *Body and Mind*, emphasises a fact which points to the priority and self-activity of the soul.[1] The fusion of sensory stimuli takes place according to laws which are psychical and have no physical counterpart. It is significant that the effects of simultaneous stimuli, when fused, are not fused in the nervous system. The fusion therefore must be *psychical*, and it must be carried out in the immaterial ground of the organism, in the unifying self or soul. Otherwise the fusion would be totally inexplicable. It may perhaps be objected, that it is hard to see how the soul can have any definite situation in the body from which to exercise its combining activity. The reply must be the reiteration of a principle on which Lotze laid much stress: the essence of being at a particular point

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 293, 297.

is just the power of acting at that point. The intimacy of the soul's relation to the body is an intimacy of action on certain corporeal elements. "The soul stands in that direct interaction which has no gradation, not with the whole of the world, nor yet with the whole of the body, but with a limited number of elements; those elements, namely, which are assigned in the order of things as the most direct links of communication in the commerce of the soul with the rest of the world."[1] Hence Lotze suggests that there may be a number of points in the brain which serve as seats of the soul; in other words, as points of action for the soul.

The previous discussion entitles us, we think, to draw the conclusion that an organism is never an automaton: it is a teleological unity whose simplest reactions have a purposive meaning. This organising principle is the soul; and at every level of organic evolution this unifying principle conditions development and makes it possible. It is not itself created by the material elements which it combines, vitalises, and uses as a means.

No doubt the argument we have developed does not prove anything directly in regard to the immortality of the soul. But it clears the way for such a doctrine by showing that the phenomena

[1] *Metaphysik*, Eng. trans., Bk. III. cap. v. p. 290.

of life demand a central unifying principle which is not the product of material factors. That this principle, after it attains its highest development in man, has a reality for itself and does not perish with the present material body, is not incompatible with the evidence, although it goes beyond it. If, however, the existence of a reality which transcends mechanical explanation be admitted, then the judgments of the natural sciences cannot apply to it. If on other grounds we are led to postulate the immortality of the soul, biology, physiology, and the natural sciences in general are not in a position to say that it is impossible. In a word, then, the issue, so far as science is concerned, is an open one.

Before we pass from this aspect of the problem, it is well to acknowledge that scientific critics have directed attention to certain perplexing considerations which arise out of the doctrine of immortality. Thus the question is asked: If immortality is a fact, where does it come in? Are all animal forms below man excluded from immortality, while all men are included? Can we say, to take a concrete case, that man in the Chellean or Mousterian age began to be immortal, but prior to that he was mortal like other animals? Is the civilised man destined to survive the death of his body, while the savage has no pre-eminence over the brutes? And the same difficulty meets us in

the development of the individual. For we may be urged to decide at what point in the growth of a human being immortality supervenes. Is the child before birth mortal, but after birth immortal? If it is thought arbitrary to draw a line of division at birth, are we to carry it farther back, and to say that at the moment of the fusion of two germ cells an immortal creation has come into being? If this sounds extravagant, would it be more reasonable to declare, that only when man attains some degree of self-consciousness does he become heir to eternal life? Or, finally, is the only logical conclusion that an immortal soul has eternally pre-existed?

From the scientific point of view it is quite legitimate to point out these difficulties, and to ask those who accept the doctrine of immortality to consider them. On the other hand, these difficulties, though no doubt puzzling, are hardly of a nature to affect the main issue decisively. The broad arguments in favour of immortality would not be discredited, even though it were not possible to distinguish narrowly the grade of life or the exact time in the development of the individual at which immortality becomes a fact. For these arguments do not hinge on our ability to define and distinguish in this fashion. It may well be that we cannot at present, and may not in the future, attain such a knowledge of the soul,

in its relations to the organism, as to be able to determine the point at which it is capable of survival after death.

Another objection which a scientific critic might urge is capable of a more definite answer. Let it be granted the soul exists, and no one will deny that, in some sense, man is a self. But, it may be argued, the personality is so bound up with the bodily functions and the habits which grow out of them, that its survival when cut loose from these is not possible. In other words, bodily habits have so gone to the making of a man's personality that the latter cannot properly exist without the former. Now the psychologist will readily admit that a man's habits are closely related to the structure of his nervous system: and these habits are reflected in character and personality. But the memory, conscious and subconscious, which has gone to the making of individual habits, is never a purely physiological process. Over and above the neural basis of memory a psychical basis is required to make the facts intelligible. And habits which are the expression of a formed personality involve *psychical* dispositions as a sustaining ground. It may not be possible in a given case to say how much in a habit is contributed by a neural and how much by a psychical disposition. But in every case the psychical factor is present, and its operation

is essential.[1] Hence the existence of these psychical dispositions may be able to secure for the self a degree of continuity with its previous state, after it has been separated from the present bodily organism. More than this is not necessary nor perhaps desirable. In saying this I am glad to be able to support the statement by the opinion of so competent an authority as Dr. McDougall. He remarks: "Though it is not possible to say just how much of what we call personality is rooted in bodily habits and how much in psychical dispositions, yet it is open to us to believe that the soul, if it survives the dissolution of the body, carries with it some large part of that which has been gained by intellectual and moral effort."[2]

So far we have been considering science as critical of the doctrine of immortality, whether by developing theories which would make mind dependent on matter, or by pointing out difficulties in the notion of a personal survival after death. I wish now before concluding this part of the subject to consider the endeavour to sift and test the so-called evidences of survival after death by a scientific method in order to reach well-established conclusions. I refer, of course, to the

[1] The silent but real influence of the psychical on the physical in man is apparent in the way subconscious processes affect organic functions like secretion and digestion.

[2] *Body and Mind*, p. 372.

labours of the Society for Psychical Research. The Society at all events strives to follow a scientific mode of investigation, though it may be some of its members have not always been sufficiently critical. Certainly the Society has done much praiseworthy work in carrying on experiments and investigations, collecting and testing materials, and drawing inferences. In principle, those who have conducted these researches have realised the need of caution and of verification so far as that was possible. Opinions differ widely about the value of these results and their bearing on the problem of survival after death. The late Frederick Myers, who spent so much time and thought on the subject, believed that definite evidence of existence after death had been produced. "We have shown," he says, "that veritable manifestations do reach us from beyond the grave."[1] And Sir Oliver Lodge holds the belief to be justified that "intelligent co-operation between other embodied minds than our own has become possible."[2] To many, on the other hand, the evidences do not appear sufficient to yield any such conclusion; for they think the phenomena under consideration are susceptible of more than one explanation. These do not point irresistibly to the conclusion that the dead are in

[1] *Human Personality*, one vol. ed., p. 352.
[2] *The Survival of Man*, p. 333.

communication with us. Of this opinion are Podmore, McDougall, and others.

It is more particularly from the phenomena connected with so-called 'cross references' that evidence for the activity of disembodied spirits has been found. A word of explanation in regard to the nature of this evidence must be given. Two or more mediums, living in different places, and these sometimes far apart, in the trance condition automatically write messages. The content of the messages may be, and often is, quite beyond the normal knowledge of the writer. When the automatic script produced by the separate writers is compared, it is found that the communications can be pieced together so as to form a more or less coherent message. This is not known to the several mediums, who are ignorant that they are collaborating to evolve a common idea. And the conclusion it is sought to establish is, that the character of the communication and the knowledge it implies are such, that the minds of the writers must have been in contact with or influenced by a disembodied mind, the mind of a particular person who has died. Here let me quote the statement of Lodge: "What we get is a fragmentary utterance in one script, which seems to have no particular point or meaning, and another fragmentary utterance in the other of an equally pointless

character; but when we put the two together we see that they supplement one another, and that there is apparently one coherent idea underlying both, but only partially revealed in each."[1] It is well known that in some experiments which have been made, the conclusion has been drawn that the spirit of the late F. W. Myers is responsible for certain vaguely connected ideas which have been put together out of the script of different persons. It is difficult to suppose, so it is argued, that telepathy between the mediums could have produced two fragments the mutual relation of which is only made clear after a careful comparison. That there is a real basis of fact in the alleged phenomena may be granted, and the phenomena are not explicable on any materialistic theory. But the question, of course, is, how far the admitted facts really carry us. On the most favourable view of the so-called communications, it would be absurd to say that they can be regarded as proofs of immortality. At the most they might be taken as an indication that the soul survived, for a time at least, the dissolution of the body. But many are not convinced that an examination of the facts warrants us in coming even to this conclusion. It may be granted there is much to show that two or more persons far apart from each other have taken part in expressing, if

[1] *The Survival of Man*, p. 329.

perhaps vaguely, a single thought or idea. But when we are asked to accept the conclusion, that the true explanation of the facts is the existence of a disembodied spirit acting on the minds of the different mediums, we can only say we are not convinced. This is certainly one way of accounting for the facts, but is it the only way? Not many who are acquainted with the evidence will categorically affirm that it is. Indeed most of those who are disposed to accept this solution would not venture to claim more than that, on the whole, it is the most probable solution. Before admitting this, however, we must consider whether the phenomena are not explicable by some cause we already know to be operative in human experience. In cases of difficulty a known cause ought to be preferred to a hypothetical one. On this point a writer we have already quoted has no doubts: he says boldly we need go no further than subliminal faculties and memories and telepathy for an explanation of the phenomena.[1] And a sympathetic observer frankly allows, that ostensible cases of telepathy from the dead can be generally explained by telepathy from the living.[2] The same writer in a more recent work admits that, "The possibility of what may be called normal telepathy, or unconscious

[1] Holmes, *Is Death the End?* p. 193.
[2] Lodge, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

mind-reading from survivors, raises hesitation about accepting messages as irrefragable evidence of persistent personal existence."[1] The hesitation here referred to is increased by the fact that the critic of spiritualism can show that the abnormal knowledge which mediums display is sometimes derived from the minds of those who consult them. An interesting example is given by Mrs. Sidgwick in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research.* In this case it seems clear that the medium in question—Mrs. Piper—was simply reproducing certain mistaken beliefs derived by telepathy from the minds of those who consulted her.[2]

Still, it is suggested, that the method of cross-references greatly diminishes the probability of this method of accounting for the facts. The fragmentary messages of the separate mediums must, it is said, if their connexion is to be understood, be explained by the hypothesis of a single mind acting on them and impressing the idea on them. And we are told that the nature of the communication indicates that this mind is the mind of a particular person who has died. The inference would be cogent if it could be shown that the hypothesis involved is the only adequate

[1] *Raymond*, p. 346.

[2] *Vide* the volume of essays on *Immortality*, Macmillan & Co., 1917, pp. 255–256.

explanation of the facts. The messages in question are very broken and vague, and one may even doubt that they necessarily proceed from a single control acting on the different mediums. Even if they did proceed from a single intelligence, it is still open to us to say it is the intelligence of some one now living. The conclusion that they can only proceed from the spirit of a particular deceased person will, I am inclined to think, only carry conviction to those who are disposed on other grounds to believe in the existence of disembodied spirits who are active in the way suggested. It would be extraordinarily hard to prove that these fragmentary and somewhat elusive messages could only have emanated from a particular deceased person. There is much to be said for the opinion, that proof of survival in any given case is almost impossible, for our knowledge is not sufficient to set limits to telepathic power.[1] Of course it will be urged that though strict proof in each instance is not possible, yet the cumulative evidence supplied by a number of cases raises a possible to the level of a probable conclusion. But this argument would only be valid if it could be made clear that the cumulative evidence served to diminish the fundamental uncertainty which attaches to each particular instance. This, however, is what it does not do.

[1] Barrett, *Psychical Research*, p. 230.

In the circumstances, whether the individual comes to a favourable or an unfavourable verdict on the problem will depend very much on the presuppositions he brings with him to the study of the phenomena. The sceptically minded will find an additional reason for their lack of faith in the disappointing character of the messages which purport to come from the departed.[1] In any case, I think it must be granted that the kind of existence which the messages suggest is not one which appeals to those who see in immortality a key to ethical and religious problems. The lot of the disembodied spirit—*animula vagula*—hampered and striving to communicate cryptic messages to friends on earth, seems scarcely desirable. One cannot help thinking that no real light is shed from this quarter on the problems of human life and destiny. Those who have carefully studied the evidence are sharply divided on the question of its value: Lodge, for example, finds positive evidence where Podmore finds no good evidence at all. It is just possible that in the future the obscurity which gathers round the subject may be broken by some fresh light. The

[1] I have said nothing about the alleged triviality of the 'messages.' This consideration unquestionably influences many adversely. Those who accept the communications as genuine contend that the trivial details have a peculiar evidential value, and are the means by which a disembodied spirit, struggling against difficulties, gives proof of its existence.

desire for some word from the soul which has gone from us is natural; and the longing that the veil that shrouds the unseen should be lifted, if but a little, is very human.

> "Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
> Before us passed the door of darkness through
> Not one returns to tell us of the road,
> Which to discover we must travel too."

But it may well be that on this great issue the final word must be one of faith and not of sight. Meanwhile the reply of the dispassionate mind to the claim that messages have been received from the other world will be, I believe, *non liquet.*

On the most favourable view the inferences drawn from Psychical Research do not warrant a belief in immortality. On any showing they do not imply more than a limited survival of the soul after death. The evidences, even when rated at their highest, cannot carry us further than a conviction that the souls of the departed linger on in a kind of attentuated existence, and may be ultimately extinguished. There is a great contrast between this 'survival' and 'eternal life.'

If we try to sum up the results of the chapter, we realise that they are not decisive. Science can supply us neither with valid grounds for rejecting nor sufficient reasons for accepting the doctrine of human immortality. In the one case as in the other, the arguments do not stand the

test of criticism. The destiny of the soul is a problem which transcends the region of empirical science. In so far as reason can deal with the problem effectively, it must do so from a philosophical standpoint. In our next chapter we shall learn how far philosophical discussion has shed light on the subject.

CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROBLEM

THE attitude of early man to the world was instinctive and uncritical. He took things as he found them, and was not troubled by the need of explaining them in our sense of the word. But curiosity is an ancient quality, and curiosity linked with the feeling of wonder begets the germ of the philosophic spirit. Man, however, had to attain to a developed self-consciousness, and to be delivered from the tyranny of animal wants and desires, ere he was capable of a free development of reflective thought. Philosophy in the full meaning of the word enters on its task when man rises to a view of the world as a whole, and strives to understand it. He asks himself what the great system within which he lives signifies, and what is his place in it. Is he the goal of created things, or merely their accidental product?

When men began to speculate on the meaning of things, it was natural that they should take up the problem of the soul and try to understand its

nature and destiny. In so doing they were not dealing with a new and strange subject; for long before the advent of systematic reflexion a body of traditional opinions and beliefs had gathered round the soul. These beliefs, as one would expect, were not coherent or consistent; but they were kept in life by the religious consciousness, and they were more or less seriously accepted by many. The incoherency of these ideas was itself a challenge to thought. The first task of philosophy was to sift and test this material, and to purify what was gross and to eliminate what was inconsistent. Even though philosophy failed to develop a constructive theory of the soul, even though its office in this reference was merely critical, it would still have performed a useful duty. To introduce order, harmony, and method into human ideas is always helpful; it is a stage on the way to systematic insight.

Speculative thought has not, however, remained content with the limited task of criticism, but has sought to reach positive conclusions. In this instance it has boldly tackled the chief problem, that of the nature and destiny of the soul, and has endeavoured to reach valid and final conclusions. But here as elsewhere philosophy has not always delivered the same message; indeed its utterances have sometimes been perplexingly

at variance one with another. In some instances, as the outcome of reflexion, philosophy has rejected the idea of immortality, and has sought to confine man's outlook to the present world. In other instances, however, it has spoken hopefully on the subject, and has even offered a reasoned argument for the immortality of the soul. Of course it is only a spiritual or idealistic line of thought that is in a position to endorse the human claim to a life after death. But every form of idealism does not countenance this conclusion, and some idealistic systems definitely reject it. Much, as we shall see, depends on the value a system of philosophy assigns to the individual whether it comes to a positive or negative decision on the question of immortality. Thus pantheism, which sacrifices the claims of the individual to the claims of the Absolute, has, if consistent, no room for personal immortality.

Our aim in this chapter must be a limited one. We cannot attempt to give even an outline of the development of philosophical thought on this important topic; nor is it necessary for the purpose in view. It will be enough to consider briefly one or two of the more influential philosophical systems in their treatment of the problem. In this way we shall learn where the stress of the problem lies, as well as the special difficulties which attach to it. Perhaps the discussion will

serve to make clear to us the lines which an attempted solution should follow. In the result we may come to the conclusion that ultimate certainty in this matter is not to be reached by metaphysics. But even though this prove to be the case, it will be a gain to know just how far the speculative reason can take us in our quest, and to realise its limitations in this respect.

Beyond doubt the most important treatment of the question by pre-Christian thinkers is that of Plato. This is true alike on account of its intrinsic merits and because of the great influence which it exercised on later thought. At the time when Plato wrote, the nature of the soul and its destiny had become a source of perplexity and a subject for discussion among the Greeks. Especially was this so among the Pythagoreans, who had espoused certain ideas about the soul which they had derived from Orphicism. The doctrine of transmigration was taken over by Pythagoras and his disciples from the Orphics, and they sought to give a more philosophic form to this and other current beliefs in regard to the soul. A common idea of the School was that the soul was a kind of 'attunement' of the body, and with this they combined a theory of metempsychosis. Plato was influenced by the teaching of the Pythagorean School, and strove to purify and

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elevate it by infusing into it an ethical meaning. He seems to have believed in the doctrine of transmigration in some form; it was, at any rate, 'a pregnant myth' for him which contained a serious moral truth. Of a future retribution for the deeds done in the body Plato was assured, and this assurance was prior to the proofs he gave of the soul's immortality. In other words, the determining element in his conviction is ethical rather than metaphysical. To put it differently, the various 'proofs' Plato offers for immortality are ways of justifying the verdict of the moral consciousness. I shall return to this point in the following chapter.

Plato sharply distinguishes the soul from the body. In the *Timæus* he spoke figuratively of the Supreme Creator fashioning the human soul out of the same cup from which he made the world-soul. The body and the mortal part of the mind were made by the created gods. Here, as often elsewhere in Plato, the postulate is the high worth and the dignity of the soul: the soul is the divine element in man, the element he derives from the Supreme God. Just as all ideas are referred to the idea of the Good as their ground and vitalising principle, so all souls are traced to the Creator as their source. In the *Phædrus* the entrance of souls into bodies is said

to be a decline from their destiny. The soul is at first overwhelmed by the body and loses the memory of the past: it resembles the sea-god Glaucon, whose form is all crusted over by weeds and shells and stones. For Plato the notion of immortality is essentially related to that of pre-existence. Nor is the soul so hopelessly plunged in forgetfulness, that significant tokens which point to its pre-existence cannot be elicited. In the *Meno*, Plato develops his theory of knowledge as 'recollection': on this view it is because we have known and then forgotten that we are now able to learn again. The doctrine of 'recollection' in Plato's eyes is scientifically valid: it explains such things as our intuitive perception of mathematical truths and their non-empirical nature.

In the *Phædo*, *Republic*, and *Phædrus*, Plato offers us a demonstration of immortality founded on the conception of the soul. In the *Phædo* he shows that the soul is not a harmony of the bodily elements. It is simple, not a σύνθετον, and so cannot be supposed to disintegrate. In the second place, it is so bound up with the ideas, in particular with the idea of life, that one must think of it as essentially living. The former argument, even were it valid, would not prove more than indestructibility: the latter proceeds, like the ontological proof, from the idea to

reality, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that there is something purely verbal about it. The soul is immortal because we must conceive it to be essentially living, in other words, immortal. In the *Republic* the nature of the argument is moral rather than metaphysical. Anything, we are told, can only be destroyed by its own proper evil: the evil incident to the soul is sin.[1] But if the soul could be destroyed, vice would have already destroyed it.

More convincing is the line of thought which Plato develops in the *Phædrus*. He shows there that the soul is distinguished from outward objects by the fact that, while they are moved from without, it is self-moved. The things of the external world are conditioned and perishable, but the soul is raised above them as an ἀρχή or first-principle. As we might put it in modern language, the soul is self-active and self-determining, and so is differentiated in principle from all external objects. The soul, then, is a source of activity in itself, and also for other things. It is neither begotten nor destroyed; for if, as Plato thought, the soul ceased to move, then movement would die out of the universe; and this is plainly impossible.[2] The primacy of activity in the soul is the positive and complementary truth to the negative argument in the *Republic* which con-

[1] *Republic*, x. 608 D ff.

[2] *Phædrus*, 245 C, D.

cludes, as we have seen, that the soul cannot be annihilated by any external evil.[1] Underlying Plato's arguments is the conviction that the soul is not the outcome of the bodily elements: it is in principle prior to the body, and so shapes and governs it. Hence the inference that it is not dependent on the body. Put in this way, the argument has still a real bearing on the question of the survival of the soul after death.

As strict proofs, Plato's arguments for the soul's immortality will hardly be found convincing. They really express the suggestive thoughts thrown out by a great mind which is striving to find a justification in the nature of things for a profound ethical faith. But about the character of the future life Plato only speaks tentatively: on this he is not disposed to dogmatise. That some good thing will befall the just soul after death is a great and uplifting hope.[2] This is the impression which is borne in on us by the wonderful picture of the last hours of Socrates drawn for us by his greatest disciple. The serenity of mind, the simple strength, the inner superiority to the harsh blows of fate which Socrates displays, bring home to us in a way that no dialectic could do the right of the human spirit to transcend the limit set by death. If Plato does not prove to

[1] *Vide* Caird, *Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, i. 213.

[2] *Phædo*, 114 C, καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἆθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς μεγάλη.

us the doctrine, he makes us feel that some of the deepest human needs are linked with faith in a life hereafter.

We may pass from Aristotle with a brief reference. He does not share Plato's belief in the pre-existence and future pilgrimage of the soul, and his attitude to immortality is critical and negative rather than positive. He speaks, it is true, of the immortal part of the soul, the active reason. But it is clear that this universal and impersonal reason carries with it no implication of a personal survival after the dissolution of the body.

1647. With the rise of modern philosophy in Descartes the immortality of the soul comes again into the foreground as a philosophical problem. According to Descartes the soul is a spiritual substance: it is the support of mental qualities, just as the body is the support of material qualities. The mental and material are set in sharp antagonism, and the physical organism is regarded as a purely mechanical system. Soul and body have no common ground, for their specific attributes, consciousness and extension, are totally disparate. For Descartes the soul really coincides with consciousness, which was supposed fully to express its nature: the idea of the sub-consciousness lay outside his purview. This clear-cut separation of soul and body lends an artificial character to

the Cartesian conception of human nature, and makes a satisfactory view of experience impossible. Mind and body come together in experience we know; and to explain the interaction of mental and material substances, Descartes supposes the soul has its seat in the pineal gland, from whence it acts on the body and is acted upon by it. But how two mutually exclusive substances could, by this arbitrary device, be co-ordinated and associated one cannot understand. In the end, Descartes is obliged to admit that we cannot think together the difference and the union of soul and body.

The manner in which Descartes defined the soul and set it in contrast to the body, made it easy for him to hold that it was simple, indestructible, and immortal. For obviously, on this hypothesis, there is nothing in the dissolution of the body which could affect the soul, which is essentially an independent substance. But the conclusion fails to bring conviction, because it proceeds on a dualism which is inconsistent with the plain facts of experience. It is just the close interaction of soul and body, as seen in the constant influence they exercise on one another, which makes the problem of justifying the survival of the spirit after death difficult. Any failure to recognise this initial fact must impair the value of our conclusions.

In Descartes we find a plurality of substances which are related and co-ordinated by the will of the Supreme Being or God. In this there is foreshadowed the problem of the relation of finite substances to the Absolute, of the many to the One. Historically this question comes before us in different forms, but ultimately the issue to be faced is this: Are the plurality of finite substances real, or do they, in the last resort, fall within the one real Being? In other words, Is plurality a fact, or is it merely a provisional point of view which cannot be maintained when we think out the deeper meaning of things? Are the many only an appearance, or are they real? In the one case we have a monistic, in the other a pluralistic theory of the universe. The way in which the problem is solved has an intimate bearing on the conception of immortality. A thoroughgoing monism which reduces all individuals to passing appearances of the One, logically precludes any hope that they will persist as identical centres of experience. On the other hand, a pluralism which recognises the ultimate reality of individual beings at least leaves room for immortality, if it does not necessarily imply it. But pantheism has no place for individuals who continuously maintain their identity over against the one real Being. The truth of this contention is illustrated in

the system of Spinoza, to which we turn for a moment.

For Spinoza, as is well known, there was only one real Being, the Absolute Substance, which is apprehended by us under the two attributes of thought and extension. Individual minds and objects are the modes in which the Infinite Substance is particularised. In themselves they have no independent reality: they only appear to have a being for themselves when they are apprehended by that lower form of mental activity which Spinoza designates *imaginatio*. By this term he denotes thought which works through sensuous images. In the fuller light of reason this appearance of independence vanishes. Spinoza, no doubt, speaks of the mind's 'eternal part,' but what he means here is the impersonal and non-individual reason in man, and this is just the divine reason in so far as it forms part of the human mind. Like the 'creative reason' of Aristotle, it can have no personal quality; and Spinoza definitely includes memory in the sphere of *imaginatio*, which is the fallible and mortal part of the mind. By implication, therefore, he clearly excludes the possibility of personal immortality. The general character of his system forbids any other conclusion, for a philosophy which has no room for real individuality has no place for personal immortality.

As opposed to the rigid monism of Spinoza, the philosophy of Leibniz is pluralistic and individualistic. He is, therefore, better able to do justice to the idea of immortality. The core of reality, according to Leibniz, is at once individual and spiritual; in other words, the being of things is not matter, but a multitude of spiritual individuals or monads. The monad is by no means identical with the atom of the physicist; for it is a psychical not a physical substance. The monads are not identical one with another; they represent the most diverse degrees of spiritual development, and extend from the lowest sub-consciousness to fully developed self-consciousness. Each monad mirrors the universe in its own specific way. The system of monads is a graduated whole, and each monad is a unity whose internal development is teleological, not mechanical. These spiritual substances are the ultimate elements of reality: they combine in very various ways to form compound substances or things, but they themselves are neither created nor do they perish. On this theory physical death is not destruction, but metamorphosis. Birth is a process to which the change of the caterpillar into the butterfly is analogous, while death is not cessation of being, but involution.

How, it may be asked, does the conception of Leibniz bear on immortality? The reply in-

volves a statement of his view of the relation of the soul to the body. The mind or rational soul is a monad which has been promoted to self-consciousness: it is the *dominant* or supreme monad in the bodily organism or subordinate system of monads. In keeping with his idea that monads are indestructible elements of the world, Leibniz held that the human soul or 'dominant monad' pre-existed. Yet it did not pre-exist as a *rational*, but as a *sensitive* soul, and it attained the higher degree when "the man whom the soul was to animate was conceived."[1] The rational soul thus understood is not created by the particular group of elements called its body, and when the combination dissolves, the soul does not perish. The significant movement by which a sensitive soul becomes a rational soul, Leibniz is inclined to regard rather as the unfolding of the immanent character of a monad than as 'an extraordinary act of God.' He differentiates the human soul from the animal or vegetative soul by the fact that, while the sensitive soul merely mirrors the world of things, the rational soul mirrors the Deity or author of Nature Himself. Despite the importance of the principle of continuity in his philosophy, Leibniz is anxious to emphasise the distinctive character and value of the human soul,

[1] *Vide* the letter of Leibniz quoted in Latta's edition of the *Monadology*, p. 116.

and to contrast it with lower forms of psychical life. In virtue of this he sees his way to maintain a doctrine of personal immortality, and he suggests that the assemblage of immortal spirits constitutes the 'city of God.'

The individualistic strain in the philosophy of Leibniz made it possible for him to do justice to the conception of immortality in a way which was impossible for Spinoza. Especially is the notion of the soul as 'dominant monad' an illuminating and fruitful one. On the other hand, the principles which led Leibniz to deny that there could be any interaction between monads made his conception of the relation of soul to body a difficult and an artificial one. For this meant that the dominant monad, while it harmonised with the group of lower monads, could neither directly influence nor be influenced by them. A theory which does justice to the facts of experience must accept the principle of interaction between soul and body. If the idea of the soul as dominant monad is to be fruitful, it must be taken to mean that the soul organises and informs the group of elements which are subordinated to it.

After Leibniz, the next important contribution to the subject came from Kant. His treatment has two aspects, a negative and a positive. In the former he submits to a searching criticism the metaphysical proofs for immortality, and in the

latter he develops his own ethical argument in support of the idea. In his criticism especially Kant did much to clear away misconceptions and to expose fallacies, and thus to set the problem in a fuller light. Students of the Kantian philosophy will remember that for Kant the self is only another name for a unity which manifests itself in determining a given manifold of sense-data. But this self-conscious principle is a unity which we only *think* in relation to the process of synthesising the manifold. In and for itself it is not an object of knowledge, and to hypostatise it as an independent reality is illegitimate. If we speak of the self as substance, we are using a category by which the ego determines objects, but a category which can have no relevancy to the ego itself as subject.[1] The way in which Kant uses the ideas of the empirical, the logical, and the transcendental self raises many difficulties, and is a source of confusion rather than light. Moreover, these subtle distinctions contribute nothing to the question of the nature of the soul. On the other hand, Kant's criticism of the old rationalistic notions of the soul as a kind of substance or metaphysical entity was valid and helpful, and went far to discredit this type of

[1] "The subject no doubt thinks the categories, but that is no reason for saying that it can have a conception of itself as an object of the categories."—Watson, *Selections from Kant*, p. 154.

thought. The Kantian arguments taught men to see, as they had not hitherto seen, that the forms of thought used in outer experience could not be uncritically applied to the self as a centre of inner experience. The notion of a simple and therefore indestructible entity or substance is a mere abstraction from external experience, and has no relevancy when applied to the soul. And, as Kant himself recognised, it is a fallacy to base immortality on simplicity; for though simplicity excludes the notion of an external disintegration of parts, in the case of consciousness it does not exclude the possibility of its gradual extinction through diminution of intensity.[1] The Kantian criticism was effective in finally banishing from modern thought the conception of the self as a kind of metaphysical entity, which was a lingering survival of Scholasticism.

On the other hand, although Kant was successful in brushing away the cobwebs spun by an older metaphysic, his own account of the self was thoroughly unsatisfactory. If the self is only a transcendental idea to which we are in the habit of referring all possible experiences, but which we can never affirm to be real, then any assurance of the individuality and permanence of the ego vanishes, and experience itself becomes illusory. As Professor Ward has pointed out, personality

[1] *Vide* Caird, *Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii. p. 33.

on this theory could be no more than a bundle of accidents, and there could be no guarantee whatever for its conservation.[1] Surely the self as real is the necessary ground of the self as idea, and makes it possible: if we had no experience of a real self, we could not form the artificial notion of a transcendental self. The self, in fact, is an active substance: it is a spiritual individual which unifies its own changing states and is a living centre of action and reaction. No doubt we cannot, as Kant saw, regard the soul as an inert metaphysical substance or entity. But we mean something entirely different when we speak of substance as in essence spiritual, active, and individual. On the latter view the notion of substance is primary and fundamental, not a mere abstraction from experience, but the centre and ground of experience.[2] And it is easy to show that it is the experience of the self as a spiritual substance unifying its changing states which is the source whence we derive that notion of substance as the supposed ground of qualities in the external world. Against this conception of the self, Kant's criticism has no point. On the other hand, Kant's warning against a hasty identification of the empirical unity of self-consciousness with the metaphysical

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 390.

[2] As Professor Ward puts it, if we divorce substance from individuality, it becomes a mere matter or stuff which cannot define the soul. *Op. cit.*, p. 392.

unity of a thinking substance was perhaps needed.

Kant's contribution to the speculative problem of immortality was mainly negative. He finally dissipated some old prejudices and superstitions which gathered round the subject. He made thinkers realise, as they had not hitherto done, the difficulties that beset any attempt to offer a metaphysical proof of immortality. Those who have learned of Kant are aware that a proof that the soul is simple and indestructible, even were such proof possible, would come far short of guaranteeing the soul's spiritual destiny.

Passing from Kant, let us turn to Hegel. His attitude to the question of immortality is interesting, for he illustrates the standpoint of a speculative monist whose fundamental principle is spiritual. His position, however, is ill defined, and he has been interpreted in different senses. He points out that the ideas of God and immortality are necessarily related, and speaks of man knowing himself in God, and thereby knowing his imperishable life in God.[1] In keeping with this, he refers to immortality as a present possession of the spirit to which belong freedom and universality. In its inner nature the spirit is lifted above time and mortality.[2] It is plain, however, that there is no

[1] *Phil. der Religion*, ed. 1840, i. p. 79.
[2] *Op. cit.*, ii. 268, 313.

definite assertion of immortality in the personal sense: the essential thing is the eternity of the spirit, which is divine and universal. In fact, a monistic idealism in which God, or the concrete universal who unifies all differentiations, is an all-inclusive unity, has hardly room for the persistence of the personal spirit after death. For it gives no adequate recognition to human personality at the outset. On this theory the soul can be no more than a function of a divine or universal reason which is specialised or differentiated by its relation to the human body. With the disintegration of the body the differentiating factor would vanish, and the spirit fall back into its pure universality. Nothing would remain to conserve even the appearance of individuality. It has indeed been asserted that the individual somehow survives as an individual in the universal consciousness. But Hegel's own language is not sufficient to warrant this interpretation; and even if it did, it is hard to see how the principles of his system admit of such an inference. I ought to add that the difficulty is not peculiar to the Hegelian philosophy: it is present in every system of pantheistic monism. It comes out plainly in Spinoza's system, and is also apparent in modern monistic theories.

The difficulty to which I am referring will also be found in the philosophy of Lotze. This writer

in one phase of his thought makes a very full and frank admission of the claims of personality, and he is impelled thereto by ethical considerations which are perfectly intelligible. Man as a centre of moral activity and value must, he urges, have a being *for himself*. In harmony with this, Lotze found in the idea of spiritual individualities or monads the key to interpretation of the realms of nature and mind. But this pluralism which his first survey of reality yielded is finally transformed under pressure of speculative reflexion into a monism, where all subordinate centres of activity are reduced to moments in the life of the one real Being which comprehends and absorbs them. So far, Lotze concedes, as the soul shows itself an independent centre of action and reaction, it may claim the title of substance.[1] But the concession is provisional, and it is withdrawn when he comes to think out the implication of the interaction of substances: it turns out then that there can be only one all-embracing substance. In an ethical interest Lotze postulates that finite centres of moral and spiritual activity must somehow be real for themselves, while his ultimate metaphysical analysis appears to allow no scope for this. This lack of consistency between the ethical and metaphysical aspects of his world-view renders Lotze's attitude to immortality doubtful and hesitating.

[1] *Metaphysik*, Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 181.

Yet some of his remarks on the problem are suggestive and valuable.

Lotze points out that if our analysis of reality yields a fundamental pluralism, then the ultimate elements of reality must be eternal and indestructible. This would apply to the soul. But while the rights of the soul as a pre-mundane substance ensured its persistence, there is no assurance that a persistence, the nature of which is undecided, would satisfy our desires. Moreover, the idea of pre-existence seemed to Lotze 'strange and improbable.'[1]

In his view all we could say is, that a soul would persist if, and in so far as, its persistence belonged to the meaning of the world. For these reasons Lotze concluded that the problem of immortality was one which did not fall to metaphysics to settle. This, as we shall see, is true, if it be taken to mean that metaphysics cannot supply a proof. But it is inaccurate to say that metaphysics is not in a position to discuss the question. Certainly metaphysics ought to have something to say on the possibility of immortality and the conditions involved in it. And this it may do, even though it cannot offer a demonstration either positive or negative. On the other hand, Lotze's grounds for holding that reasoned proof on the subject cannot be produced are good.

[1] *Op. cit.*, ii. 182. Cp. *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 390

He points out that only if man stood at the centre of the universe, and had a full vision of the complex whole and its parts, would he be in a position to foretell the destiny of individuals. To determine these destinies one would require to know the supreme end of things, and this knowledge we do not possess. The question whether, in the absence of a clear knowledge of man's destiny, there may not be a legitimate faith, is one with which Lotze does not deal. His undecided attitude on this question is explicable, when we call to mind the lack of coherency between his ethical postulates and his speculative conclusions. In fact, the speculative unity in which Lotze absorbs the elements of experience stands in the way of a frank acceptance of the ultimate persistence of human personalities.

The view entertained of the possibility of immortality is closely connected with the conception of personality which is the outcome of philosophical analysis. If, as British thinkers like Messrs. Bradley and Bosanquet contend, the human self is not ultimately real, if, that is to say, it belongs to the realm of appearance merely, then the grounds for expecting its survival after death must be slender. If the notion of the finite self involves contradictions, and if the pathway to reality is found by the rigorous application of the principle of non-contradiction in virtue of

which everything to which a contradiction attaches is condemned as a mere appearance, then in the last resort all finite centres of experience must be dissolved in the Absolute. For these centres have in the end only an adjectival existence, and the truth of the finite is to be taken up into the Infinite. If human personality is ultimately an appearance, the dissolution of the body would seem to remove the last ground for the lingering persistence of the appearance. Nothing can escape absorption in the Absolute. Hence we find Dr. Bosanquet insisting that the human self is beyond escape an element in the Absolute here and now, and consequently it is an 'inconceivable abstraction' to place eternity and perfection in a future beyond time.[1] While it is true that man desires the conservation of values, it is urged that it would be unjustifiable to identify this with the conservation of persons. What we really desire, if we make our desires consistent, is the conservation of 'our main interests.' These interests are affirmed, and finite selves are lifted beyond the region of perpetual failure, through their continuity with the Absolute. The eternal Whole is the ultimate reality and satisfaction of finite selves.

The outcome of this interesting line of thought is distinctly antagonistic to the notion of immortality in the commonly accepted sense of the

[1] Vide *The Destiny and Value of the Individual*, p. 258 ff.

word. Yet we are asked to believe that our main interests, the values on which we set store, are somehow maintained in the Absolute. How this should be so is not apparent. In what way can value be conserved if the personal lives which make value real are not conserved? Surely it is an 'inconceivable abstraction' to speak of impersonal values! Eliminate the personal reference, and values as such cease. If it be said they are preserved in the Absolute, the answer must be that the interests at stake are human and personal, and they stand or fall with the maintenance of the personalities with which they are bound up. Granted, for the sake of argument, that they could somehow be preserved in the Absolute, then in the Absolute they would be transmuted into something quite different from what they are for *us*. But I should deny that an impersonal Absolute can in any true sense be a guardian of values at all.

If one accepts the premises of the philosophical theory before us, the conclusions certainly follow. It is just the premises, however, that many will feel compelled to challenge. Neither individuality nor personality as a centre of value and ethical responsibility, can be reduced to mere appearance. From a logical point of view the principle of identity is fully as important as that of non-contradiction, and must not be ruthlessly sacri-

ficed to it. If individual selves are not real, experience is not real; and to deny the reality of personality is to deny the validity of the judgments of the moral consciousness. I venture to think that any apparent difficulty in developing a consistent conception of finite personality ought not to be made a ground for so transforming the conception, that it no longer corresponds to the facts of life. For the facts of life have a greater claim on our acceptance than a subtle dialectic which resolves them into unreal abstractions.

A metaphysical proof of immortality, like a metaphysical proof of God, will always fall short of demonstration. The conclusion will always go beyond what is established in the premises. On the other hand, it is quite competent for us to criticise a metaphysical system which excludes the possibility of immortality; and we are entitled to show, if we can, that it involves inconsistency or does some injustice to the data of experience. And in the case of a pantheistic philosophy, this, it seems to me, can be accomplished.

But the function of philosophical reflexion in this matter is not, of necessity, purely negative and critical. If philosophy cannot offer logical proof, it can at least indicate possibilities and throw out suggestions; and in this way it may do something to cast light on the problem. Now I believe that along one line of thought philosophy

has developed ideas which will be found helpful, because they enable us to see a way in which personal survival after death is possible, not to say probable. I refer to the type of thought which finds in individuality the key to the meaning of reality. On this theory individuals have a being *for* themselves: they are real, even though it should turn out that this reality is dependent and not ultimate. According to this view, the universe consists of a multiplicity of monads or spiritual substances essentially active, and in constant interaction with one another. In other words, the inner bond which unifies what we call the attributes or qualities of an object is spiritual, that is to say, it is conceived after the analogy of the self which unifies the changing states of a conscious individual. The spiritual individuality revealed in man is the high level of a principle which extends downward into the realm we call nature. Self-conscious mind is only one phase of mental activity: it is the ripe fruition of a spiritual process which runs back to the wide region of the sub-consciousness. That there is not more in the external realm of nature than a multiplicity of interacting individuals or spiritual reals we do not assert; but the point is, that the organised and qualitatively differentiated world of things is made possible by a vast multiplicity of monads systematically connected and

infinitely graduated. As distinguished from atomism this is a spiritual, not a mechanical theory of reality: for on this hypothesis matter in its ultimate nature is akin to mind, and even the lowest grade of being is something far different from dead mechanism. To put it otherwise, mere matter and mechanism are abstractions, and the lowest level of being is at root living and teleological. From this point of view the various grades of existence would represent the monads or elements of reality as they enter into more or less complex systems—systems ruled by final causes or by ends which are immanent. Just as the different organs of a body in their dispositions and functions conspire to realise the ends of the organism to which they are subordinated, so are spiritual substances or monads grouped and organised teleologically in the interests of developing reality. On this view the nature of things is at root spiritual; for even on its lowest level being is akin to mind, and matter in the sense of the materialist does not exist. Nor can the old idea of a sharp contrast and an essential antagonism between the nature of the soul and of the body be maintained. On the contrary, there is an inner affinity between them; the soul has kinship with the elements that compose the body, but it stands for a fresh and higher stage of development. If we follow the

suggestion of Leibniz, the soul or spirit is the 'dominant monad' which organises the elements composing the body into a teleological system or whole in which each element is determined as a means to an end.

If this theory be accepted in its main outlines, it will follow that there are different grades of soul just as there are different levels of organic development. The human mind or spirit reveals the highest form of soul, for, in the self-consciousness of man, the process of spiritual evolution reaches its highest point on earth. It is important, however, to bear in mind that, when we speak of personality and personal survival, we mean more than the persistence of a separate spiritual substance. For the nature of personality is complex, and it is made possible by the body, and by those connexions with the world and other personal selves which are mediated by the body. To some extent at least the system of memories which goes to form a concrete personality is associated with the body and its relations. And the problem is how far these are involved in the doctrine of personal immortality. I content myself at this point with indicating the problem, and at present will consider how the conception here developed stands in regard to the question of pre-existence.

It is obvious that we cannot speak of a con-

crete human personality, which is a centre of specific relations and memories, as pre-existing. On the other hand, may not the essential self have existed prior to its setting in a particular material and historic environment? It may be true that there is no empirical evidence that the individual's existence began with his present body.[1] But a negative proposition like this of necessity determines little, though it may be useful as a caution against a prejudice. It would follow, of course, that, if the human soul is inherently imperishable, it must have pre-existed, since that which came into being might also pass out of existence. But this intrinsic imperishability is what is not proved. And if the self in some form existed prior to its association with the earthly body, it can hardly be the self as we know it. That, we may agree with Lotze, would be 'a strange and improbable idea.' None the less, on the monadistic hypothesis, there is a sense in which pre-existence is conceivable. Let me explain.

The ultimate elements of the body, as monads, existed before their combination in this particular body. The teleological principle of the corporeal system, the dominant monad, also pre-existed as a monad, if not as an organising conscious soul. But this plainly is not equivalent to personal pre-exist-

[1] Cp. Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 394.

ence. Theological thinkers, when confronted with the issue whether the human soul was in being in some form prior to this bodily life, or whether at a point in time when the body was in process of formation it was created, have spoken with an uncertain voice. On one side there is the theory known as Traducianism—the theory which has it that the soul as well as the body is transmitted from the parents. On the other side, the theory called Creationism contends that the soul was created independently of the body; in the case of each individual person it was infused into the fœtus from an external source. The latter theory came to prevail; and it had the support of Anselm and Thomas Aquinas. Neither hypothesis, as it stands, is free of difficulty. To suppose that the soul can somehow be transmitted by procreation from the parents is only to substitute one mystery for another. Is the soul derived from one parent or from both? The one alternative is as open to objection as the other. Moreover, it seems a strangely materialistic and unspiritual idea of the soul, that it can be passed on from parent to offspring in this mechanical and arbitrary fashion. The Creationist hypothesis, again, does not harmonise with the commonly accepted principle of evolution. In the form in which the conception has been usually held it implies a break in the development of animal life; because, *ex hypo-*

thesi, when the human stage was reached a process of creation *ab extra* began. Undoubtedly there is an awkwardness in presuming the intrusion at a particular point of an entirely new principle which interrupts the continuity of development, and at a point which is not readily fixed. Nor on this view is it easy to explain how the principle of heredity should operate in bringing about mental qualities in the offspring resembling those of parents and ancestors.

In dealing with this question I am conscious how much more readily one can criticise attempted solutions than offer one which is even relatively free from objection. There is no theory which is entirely satisfactory, and man will perhaps never achieve a full understanding of the mystery. Still, on the monadistic hypothesis already sketched, certain suggestions can be made.

Between the soul, or organising principle of the body, and the spirit, or self-conscious mind, it seems right with Leibniz to draw a distinction. Spirit is soul raised to a higher power or level of development, and the soul is the mediating element between the body and the spirit.[1] On this theory we should hold that the soul or dominant monad pre-existed before it built up out of lower elements this particular human body.

[1] So I. H. Fichte, *Seelenfortdauer*, p. 156.

But as it did not previously exist in the form of self-conscious mind, the fact of its pre-existence does not imply that it carries with it into its new state memories of the former state. At most the dominant monad might be the bearer of 'organic' memories associated with the body which it had previously informed; and it is through some such persisting element that one would try to explain the factor of heredity in evolution. To put it concisely, the hypothesis amounts to the assertion that the basis of personality pre-existed, but not the self-conscious personality itself.

How then, it will be asked, are we to interpret the development of the dominant monad into the self-conscious personality? We cannot consistently think of it as a new creation somehow superimposed on the monad from without; for this would be open to the criticism levelled against the Creationist theory. It must rather be due to a quickening of the monad from within, so that it blossoms into a self-conscious and spiritual life. In dealing with this question Leibniz suggested it was possible the elevation of the soul (*âme*) to rational mind (*ésprit*) might be due to an extraordinary act of God. He adds, however,—and more in harmony with his philosophical principles —that he prefers to consider the process as the unfolding of the germinal possibilities with which souls destined to become rational were originally

endowed.[1] The trouble here is that Leibniz introduces an original difference of kind between rational and other souls, when, on his own law of continuity, there should only be a difference of degree. And to trace developmental differences back to germinal differences is an apparent rather than a real explanation. In fact, the purely 'preformative' conception of evolution is now widely recognised to be inadequate. Development is discovered to reveal features that are not to be traced to implicit qualities in the elements involved. If we study the stages of a development, and especially in the case of mind, the process discloses at points the emergence of something specifically new. Such a point is the transition from the lower level of sense to the higher level of intellect. At this point we note the emergence of a new form of synthesis due to the creative activity of mind. A new form like this is related to the past but it is not explained by it. Hence the old preformation theory is being replaced by the conception of *creative evolution* or epigenesis, in which fresh beginnings are possible. As an epigenesis, then, we may interpret the emergence of the rational soul. But, of course, this creative activity of mind requires itself to be accounted for. So one is brought back in the end to the question why

[1] *Théodicée*, section 397; cp. *Monadology*, section 82.

there should be a spiritual development in the world—a development which has issued in the self-conscious spirit of man. If, as we believe, it is not possible to discern the ultimate explanation in the elements of the process itself, the explanation must be found in the immanent quickening and conserving activity of God, the final Ground of the world and spiritual life. The divine activity is not arbitrary but continuous and pervasive, and is the sufficient reason of the development of soul into self-conscious spirit. On this view we shall trace the supremacy of the human self-consciousness, not to some intrinsic germinal characteristic, but to the quickening of the Divine Spirit 'through whom all spirits live.' In other words, man owes his specific character to God, and if the human soul is immortal, its immortality is the gift of God.

At this stage it may be well to ask if there are features in the spiritual or self-conscious personality of man which encourage us to believe he is the heir to an immortality which is denied to souls of lower form. Why should death be the end of the animal and not of the man? It is, of course, easy to point out various characteristics which differentiate the human from the animal intelligence. But without enlarging on these, let us note the presence in man of a new independence of mental and spiritual life. We see in him

the culmination of the process by which the inner life has gradually liberated itself from the material conditions from which it emerged. In this process reflex and instinctive actions have passed into deliberative will: tied ideas have become ideas freely moving: passive memory has been transformed into active and purposive recollection. And with this advance are associated fresh powers of initiative and of self-conscious reflexion. It is a long way from the purely sentient individual up to the self-conscious person. The movement is one of steadily growing mental power. While mind in developed man has still close relations to the body, it exercises powers of inhibition and control over the body, and even gains a degree of freedom from and independence of bodily conditions. The tie which binds soul to body, in the case of man, if it has not been broken, has at least been loosened. The conclusion might appear easy, that this degree of independence is a pledge of survival after the death of the body.

But here a difficulty emerges. The rational spirit has issued, we have supposed, from a divinely quickened soul; but it retains no memory of its former condition. Can we believe it will be otherwise with the spirit when its connexion with the present body has been dissolved? Is to die not to pass through the waters of Lethe? It has been argued that the value of immortality does

not depend on the mind retaining a memory of the past. Loss of memory does not mean annihilation, and the past continues to influence us though we do not remember it. So the personal relations of our life here may have much to do in determining our condition hereafter, even though the two states are not linked by the bond of memory.[1] In reply, I should contend that, though it is true "Everything is not lost with the loss of memory," yet so much is lost that the conception of immortality is thereby emptied of most of its significance. Granted that, despite the failure of memory, there would still be a kind of continuity between the present and the future life, yet it would be the continuity of a sub-conscious substance, not that of a personal spiritual life. And, say what you will, an unconscious identity means little. That we do forget a good deal in this life without disrupting the continuity of our personal interest and purpose is not really relevant to the issue. For, apart from the activity of memory linking together the conscious spaces of our life, our existence on earth would not be a personal existence at all. And if all our mundane experiences were swallowed up in the gulf of forgetfulness, the future existence would in no true

[1] For a statement of this view, *vide* McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 49 ff. Also *Human Immortality and Pre-Existence*, p. 100 ff.

sense be *our* personal existence. A life after death which had no conscious connexion with the life before death is not a life for which we could own ourselves responsible. We could not regard it as an object of hope and expectation, nor would it stand for a spiritual goal which was the consummation and completion of our earthly endeavour. After all, what man needs is an ethical and spiritual self-fulfilment, not the mere persistence of a metaphysical identity. *Per contra*, it may be granted that it is not essential that the whole body of earthly memories should be carried over into our after-existence. As we have noted, we forget much in our earthly life without disrupting our personality: it is enough that we should recognise ourselves in the different stages of our history, and realise a continuity of meaning and interest between the mundane and supra-mundane phases of our being.

On the question how a degree of memory may be preserved after the dissolution of the material organism, I have already touched in an earlier chapter.[1] It may suffice at present to remind you that, while memory has a physiological basis, it is not purely a matter of cerebral structure. To explain its working one must postulate the existence of psychical dispositions, which stand in a

[1] *Vide* pp. 89–90.

more intimate relation to the mind than to the cerebral areas. This psychical basis of memory may function apart from the physical basis. In this way a degree of memory which will ensure a conscious personal continuity may be possible, even after the dissolution of the particular bodily organism with which the mind has been associated. On the other hand, there appear to be limits to this possibility. Memory, with the psychical dispositions through which it functions, has developed in relation to a definite bodily organism and a specific material environment. With reference to these the self has evolved the qualities and habits which have gone to form its character as a member of society. And the problem is, whether the self could maintain a continuity of personal life, if *all* continuity between its present environment and its future were broken. In other words, would the group of memories which are involved in personal survival possess adequate meaning in an environment so changed that they had ceased to have any relevancy to it? One would suppose that some continuity of organism and environment is requisite, in order that the one group of experiences should be known to be related to the other.[1] But we have no means of determining how much is necessary. If we lay stress, as we feel entitled

[1] So, for instance, Professor Ward is disposed to allow. Vide *Realm of Ends*, p. 395.

to do, on the relative transcendence of the self-conscious ego with the psychical dispositions which are intimately related to it, then memory might be conserved despite great changes brought about in the body and its environment by death. But how great the changes are which ensue on death we cannot say, and conjecture in the circumstance is unprofitable. On the other hand, it is certainly difficult to suppose that the organism and the environment, closely linked together as they are, could pass utterly away, and the personality which had developed in them and through them remain in the fullest sense *one* personality. To put it differently: it is hard to imagine that a pure disembodied spirit could sustain and express the self and character of a man in a way that would make it possible for us to claim that it represented his *personal* survival after death. On the other hand, it is still more evident that immortality is not conceivable under the present conditions of life on earth. Mundane life is in its essence transitory; it contains from the first the seeds of decay and dissolution. We cannot consistently think of it as prolonged indefinitely. Nor would its mere repetition in other circumstances solve any of the spiritual problems at issue. Some transformation of the organism and the environment there must be, if the soul is to enter on a new phase of existence enriched by the experiences and memories

of the past. The future life, if it is to be of value, must be a higher stage of being which is the development of the present life, and not simply its recurrence.

The conditions which appear to be involved in a spiritual doctrine of immortality would be fulfilled, if the organism and environment were transfigured so as to become the medium of a higher development of soul, without at the same time making an absolute break of continuity with the past. If a pure disembodied spirit is an abstraction, we must replace it by a more concrete notion. Such would be the idea of a developed self, no longer thwarted and impeded by the body, but fashioning for itself an organism to be the more perfect instrument of the spirit. It may be asked if there is any evidence which would incline us to accept an idea like this. We confess there is no evidence at our disposal which would form a sufficient basis for the conclusion. The view we are developing is meant to be tentative: it will not compel assent. At most we can say this hypothesis gives in some ways a satisfying answer to the problems at issue, and we can suggest one or two considerations which may help to commend it.

The bodily structure, we have seen, is a teleological system, and in the development of this system function determines structure and not *vice*

versa.[1] For example, an animal develops eyes that it may see; it does not see because it happens to have developed eyes. Hence in man the bodily character has been developed in reference to his function as a thinking and rational being. The teleological principle which organises the elements of the body is the soul as dominant monad. In man the soul assumes the form of a self-conscious ego, and it has organised a complex body and a highly articulated brain structure in its service. The great development of the association areas in the cortex must be understood as an evolutionary response to the needs of the growing intelligence and the increasing demands of reflective thinking. Now there is no convincing reason for supposing that the mundane development of the human soul is the ultimate limit of its development; and some considerations encourage us to believe that it is not so. If the possibility has to be conceded, as we think it must, we can at least suggest how it may be realised. The self-conscious soul is an active and a constitutive principle. The upbuilding activity which it manifests in the terrestrial sphere is an indication how it may organise for itself a higher kind of body in order to meet the

[1] The latter opinion was already advanced by Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, iv. 830. Though the theory does not lack support in modern times, the biological facts cannot be interpreted in this way with any probability. Bergson's treatment of the point in his *Creative Evolution* is very suggestive.

conditions of a higher stage of existence. The conception of creative evolution will recur to us in this connexion. An analogy to this transition from a lower to a higher stage of being may be found in the developmental process by which the animal soul has risen to the realm of self-conscious spirit. And the organism it has formed for itself corresponds to its heightened activity and its enlarged needs. True, the analogy is not perfect: for in the one case we are considering a process which falls within the mundane sphere, and in the other we have in view a development which, in its issues, transcends that sphere. Yet this disparity may not mean more than a difference of degree: it may only point a more radical transformation of the organism which is to be the instrument of a nobler form of spiritual life. I need hardly remind you that a thought very similar to this was put forward by St. Paul, in his doctrine of the resurrection body. The apostle realised very clearly that the risen body could not be the mere resuscitation of the earthly one, for, as he exclaims, "flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The new life of the spirit demands a more perfect instrument. Hence the apostle speaks of a spiritual body, which he contrasts with the natural or fleshly body. What he meant by a spiritual body, and how he conceived it to be related to the earthly body, we do not clearly understand. It

is not at all likely that Paul had developed a definite theory on the subject. But at least it is certain, that the notion of the spiritual body involves the idea of an organism somehow transfigured and fashioned to be the appropriate instrument of the purified spirit. Nor do we ourselves know how the process of transformation is carried out. But the essential factor in its accomplishment must be the formative power of the soul, which builds up for itself an organism adequate to its needs. On this view death is not a term: it is only an episode or transitional point in the development of the spirit. In no sense would it mean the extinction of the soul, but rather the sleep from which it emerges to greet the dawn of a new day. The analogy of sleep suggests to us that death, though it involve a temporary lapse into the region of the unconscious, need not on that account imply any complete break of continuity between the new life and the old. The persisting self can link in memory the two phases of existence.

Nevertheless death stands for a great change, and of this there can be no manner of doubt. With the organic change which death brings there appears to be implied the transformation of the present temporal and material environment. The new development of the spirit calls for such a transformation, and it must have far-reaching effects. The slightest reflexion shows how closely

the functions and structure of the earthly life, with its impulses, emotions, and desires, are related to the bodily organism and the environment with which the organism interacts. The alteration of the material medium of life by death consequently carries with it a change in the personal life after death. Popular thought commonly fails to realise this, and tends to read the old into the new. A familiar illustration of this failure is the question which long ago the Sadducees addressed to Christ. A consequence has been the persisting tendency of ordinary people to make the after-world a kind of glorified copy of this world. The corrective to this habit must be found in a fuller recognition of the far-reaching change brought about by death. For it means much that the familiar body of flesh should be dissolved, and the soul should clothe itself in a new and celestial apparel. The former needs and desires, as well as the temporal and spatial relations in which they are set, lose their old significance and are transformed. It is common to speak of the state after death as an eternal state, and the future world as the eternal world. The phrase emphasises the contrast of old and new. Yet, if it be taken to mean that the future existence wholly transcends time, so that even the notion of change is excluded, then the idea is certainly open to criticism. A purely static conception of soul, a conception that is to

say which left no room for changing mental states, is unintelligible to us; and it could have no real and living relation to our mundane experience. At the higher stage of spiritual development the earthly time-order is most probably transcended; for the present time-span is left behind and time gains a new meaning, while the old division into days and months and years no longer counts. But behind time as concrete duration is change, and the notion of change is fundamental; for change forms the indispensable basis on which our time-constructions are raised. Not even from the Divine Mind can we consistently eliminate the idea of changing states. Hence the objections which can be urged against the common opinion that the eternal world is the changeless world, and eternal life an absolutely static condition. It may well be that after death the soul is raised above the separations and uncertainties incident to the time-process on earth. Yet a fixity of condition that left no room for development is a transformation so radical that it is hard to see how the line of continuity with the earthly life could be maintained. Nor would a life where the door was closed to all possibilities of change be, so far as we can see, a truly spiritual life.

In this discussion, it ought to be said, we are dealing largely with possibilities, not with truths which can be regarded as proved. From a

philosophical standpoint certain ideas have been advanced which indicate the principles on which a life after death might be realised. But these ideas are tentative: they cannot be taken for a proof that the life in question will actually be realised. Nor are they evidence that immortality in any form is a true belief. The fact is, I think, that metaphysics cannot yield cogent conclusions on this subject. In saying this I am aware some speculative thinkers of eminence take and have taken a different view. Thus the late Professor Royce of Harvard and Dr. McTaggart of Cambridge cherish the conviction that a metaphysical proof of immortality can be given. Dr. McTaggart, for instance, will be found arguing, that the Absolute has eternally differentiated itself in finite centres, which neither come into being nor pass away. The human ego is one of these finite differentiations, and therefore is eternal and immortal. The trouble is that the writer does not prove that the Absolute must be differentiated in the manner he supposes, nor, even if this were so, that the human self is one of these differentiations. A hypothesis, more or less questionable, differs *longo intervallo* from a demonstration. Our insight into the universe is neither wide enough nor deep enough to admit of our giving a rational deduction of the destiny of human souls. 'We know in part,' and just

because of this metaphysical proofs of immortality will fail in cogency. The wise metaphysician will recognise his limitations, and be content to develop suggestions and indicate possibilities. If a solid conviction is to be won in this field, it must be the fruit of reflexion on moral and spiritual experience rather than the outcome of speculative discussion. Here, as in the other ultimate problems of the universe, the patient and ever-searching reason gives place at the last to the upward vision of faith.

Meanwhile, if the possibilities of immortality with which speculative reason deals are to be crowned by a more sure and certain hope, the way to this will lie in a candid study of the moral issues which are involved. The case for immortality will be greatly strengthened, if it can be shown that it is strongly supported by ethical considerations. The failure of speculative thought to demonstrate immortality will be adequately atoned for, if it can be made clear that immortality is a valid postulate of the moral consciousness.

CHAPTER V

THE ETHICAL ARGUMENT FOR IMMORTALITY

A THEORETICAL proof of immortality is, we have concluded, not possible. From the data at our disposal we cannot reach the goal by any irrefragable logical process. Our speculative results in this connexion do not amount to more than a probable argument, and the human mind craves for more. After the speculative reason has shown a way or ways in which a life after death may be realised, men naturally desire some definite assurance that these possibilities are actualities. To many it has seemed that the ethical argument supplies such an assurance. The facts of moral experience, when their meaning and bearing are examined, are thought to justify faith in a future life. In other words, they are believed to warrant the faith that man's life on earth is only a stage in the development of his spirit. A higher and a transcendent form of existence appears to be necessary, if man's ex-

perience in this world is to be justified by the moral reason.

At present there are those who regard with hostility any attempt to introduce what they call theological implications into ethics. Ethics, it is said, has its own sphere, which is complete in itself: ethics deals with the values of human experience, and has no need to go beyond them. Our moral judgments are quite independent of any beliefs about the future destiny of the soul.[1] In evidence of this independence it is urged, that man's ethical life is not really influenced by a belief in immortality. As a practical motive the belief does not count.[2] But I doubt that, if the belief were practically useless, it could have maintained itself as it has done. Beliefs which have been divorced from action wither and die, while beliefs which persist always stand in some vital relation to practice. Nevertheless there is this element of truth in the opinion we are considering: the system of moral values will not be revolutionised by the presence or absence of faith in immortality. A man may retain his faith in duty after he has lost his faith in a future life, as

[1] So Paulsen, *System of Ethics*, Eng. trans., p. 440, "Ethics will not change a single proposition whether there be a life after death or not."

[2] It is rather curious that Holmes, who accepts immortality, should give exaggerated expression to this view in his book, *Is Death the End? Vide* p. 333.

there are examples to show. Yet to admit this is not to say the conviction, that our existence here is teleologically related to a higher form of existence hereafter, does not exercise a real influence on our valuations. If it does not subvert our moral values, it sets them in a new perspective and lends them a deeper significance. The fact gives a higher importance to our acts of moral choice, that we recognise they go to the making of a character which persists after this earthly form of being has passed away. And if all moral values are doomed in the end to perish, they must lose in meaning and reality, even though good continue to be good for the individual, and evil evil.

I do not think, therefore, that what are called the religious postulates of ethics are practically of no effect. They certainly invest experience with deeper significance. Yet the issue we have in view just at present is not directly concerned with the sphere of ethics or the bearing of immortality on ethical conduct. For quite apart from the opinion we have on this subject, the main question with which we have to deal is the question, whether the data of human experience can be justified and found consistent by the developed moral consciousness. This is not a matter of theory, or hypothesis, but of facts. If, as the result of a dispassionate survey, we find our present experience reveals moral anomalies and

inconsistencies, we shall then be in a position to consider whether the situation is not remedied, if we postulate a life to come and a supramundane order of things. To answer the question in the affirmative is, of course, to recognise that ethics raises issues which transcend the present world-order. This is the general problem with which the ethical argument for immortality deals.

Let us now examine more closely the nature of the so-called moral proof for immortality. It is usual to speak of proof in this reference, but it is well to point out that it is not a proof in the scientific sense of the word. For we do not deduce immortality by the method which shows that, from a certain rational connexion of elements, a further connexion inevitably follows. The moral argument is not a strict deduction from given data, but a demand. It is a claim that man, as an ethical being, makes on the universe in which he lives and acts. In other words, it is a postulate put forward to harmonise the facts of experience, and to make them consistent with the demands of the moral consciousness. To identify this procedure with an argument from human wishes and desires is quite unfair and misleading. Those who persist in doing so easily succeed in showing human desires are variable, often inconsistent, and sometimes such that, in the nature of things, they are doomed to disappointment. A

recent writer remarks that the desire for immortality finds its "main support . . . in the yearnings of the heart for the maintenance of the bonds of love and friendship, and in the desire to think highly of oneself and the universe."[1] And were this all that could be said, it would be fair to point out, as the author in question does, that such desires carry with them no guarantee of their realisation. It is man's fate often to desire in vain. But this line of reasoning does grave injustice to the moral argument, which rests, not on subjective feelings, but on the demand of the practical reason for coherence and harmony in a moral universe. There is nothing arbitrary or casual in making a postulate which is needed for the moral organisation of life. The point is to show that it is needed. Nor is the method of postulation singular. The philosopher and the man of science alike make postulates. The former bases his endeavour to rationalise experience on the postulate that the universe is a rational whole: the latter postulates that the uniformities he discovers in nature will hold good in the future as they have done in the past. These postulates cannot be strictly proved, but they are demands necessary to justify the procedure of the thinker and the scientist. Of course it may be said, even by a sympathetic critic, that the universe would not

[1] J. H. Leuba, *The Belief in God and Immortality*, p. 313.

become 'a sheer irrationality' apart from the postulate of personal immortality.[1] And it is true that man can live an orderly life in the world without accepting the doctrine. But the larger question remains, whether without the postulate of immortality the facts of ethical experience can be conceived as a consistent and harmonious whole. In other words, can we, apart from the acceptance of immortality in some form, justify the world as a moral cosmos? In the following pages I shall try to give some reasons why we cannot do so.

Our duty at this stage will be to consider the nature and meaning of the ethical facts which lead to the postulate of personal immortality. They are fairly familar to students of the subject. Broadly speaking, I think there are two general lines of evidence which can be distinguished, though they are related to one another. The former rests on the claims of justice, and the second on the incompleteness of the ethical and personal life. I go on to discuss them in order.

I. The argument based on justice asserts the importance and value of justice: it assumes that justice is an essential element in the order and working of the universe, just as it is essential to human society. The argument carries with it

[1] *Vide* Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in Recent Philosophy*, p. 45.

the rejection of a purely naturalistic view of life as well as the purely mechanical conception of the world. If a man is content with a non-moral universe, then the moral argument will leave him cold. The argument turns on the value of justice, and the need that its claims should be met. If justice is to be realised in the system of things and in the experience of individuals, man's life on earth can only be a stage of his development which leads up to and issues in a supramandane form of existence. This line of thought has a prominent place in Plato, and it will be interesting and helpful to look for a little at his treatment of the problem.

In Plato's discussions on immortality the ethical interest, as we have noted, is dominant, and this was the determining factor in forming his faith in a life of the soul after death. He firmly believed that justice, the principle of perfection in society and in the individual, also reigned in the universe. In virtue of this a law of retribution was operative, which was not confined to this life. Here and now justice is the health and injustice the disease of the soul. Justice has its good reward and injustice brings a hard fate; but these goods and ills are only the foretaste of greater things to come.[1] Sin and vice disfigure the soul while it lives on earth, so that it comes to resemble the

[1] *Republic*, 613 E ff.

sea-god Glaucon, who was so crusted over with shells, weeds, and stones that his divine form was hardly recognisable.[1] If death were the end of all, the wicked man would have a good bargain in getting quit of his body and his soul at the same time.[2] In the *Phædo* and the *Gorgias*, Plato insists on the fact of a future retribution for the deeds done in the body. The *Phædo* and the *Republic* contain, in the garb of myth, symbolic pictures of the punishment of the wicked and the fate of the soul in the after-world. Among wicked persons, Plato distinguishes those who are curable and those who are incurable.[3] The latter are cast into Tartarus, while the former must suffer for their sins and go through a course of purification. Only after this discipline can they attain to those fair habitations "which it is not easy to describe."[4] This discernment of a world to come where Justice accomplishes her mission gives a new incentive and a deep seriousness to human life. When the issues of life are seen to extend beyond the present world, human choice becomes charged with a momentous significance; and this truth is emphasised in a myth of the *Phædrus*. After death there follows, we are told, a period of retribution for the evil the individual has done on earth. Souls sink to the world again when a

[1] *Op. cit.*, 611 C, D.
[2] *Phædo*, 107 C.
[3] *Gorgias*, p. 525; *Phædo*, p. 113.
[4] *Phædo*, p. 114 C.

thousand years have elapsed, and choose the lives they are to live for another term of existence. The soul which has thrice in succession chosen the best life, passes, freed from the body, to the realm of spiritual bliss.[1] Here we have moral truth 'embodied in a tale.' Without laying stress on the details of Plato's symbolism, we can mark that he is in earnest with the idea that human choice has consequences which reach far beyond the present world. In his view, punishment has a part to play alike in this life and in that to come, whether by way of retribution or as a deterrent. In the case of those whose wickedness is curable there will be a process of purification in which the soul will be gradually liberated from the tyranny of sensuous desire. To the last Plato believed in "a justice of Heaven" in accordance with which the soul, by reason of the character it had formed on earth, passed upward to the heavenly places or downwards to Hades.[2] For the utterly and incurably bad, he suggests that the state of punishment may be eternal.[3]

This rapid outline will at least show how Plato anticipated most of the later ideas on the subject. The main thought which governs his view of the soul's fate is the principle that the claims of justice must be fulfilled. A man must reap as he

[1] *Phædrus*, p. 249; *Republic*, pp. 619–621.
[2] *Laws*, p. 904. [3] *Phædo*, p. 113 E.

has sown; and if this does not always hold in this life, there must be a world to come in which justice gets its due. No scheme is complete in which the worst offenders sometimes do not receive their desert. The argument has not wholly lost its force, and a natural instinct prompts us to believe that the notorious evil-doer, who has evaded justice here, will meet it hereafter. At the same time this argument is subject to certain qualifications. Retribution is not an end in itself, and punishment in general must be regarded as a means of improving and educating the individual. An endless punishment, which can have no educational value, is felt to be meaningless. On the other hand, punishment judiciously used as a means to an end has a legitimate function in society, as every one will admit. None the less the plea for a future life in the interests of retaliatory justice has, it must be confessed, lost something of its cogency and value for the modern mind. The appeal to the fear of future punishment as an inducement to virtue and a restraint from vice is not, in the light of experience, quite convincing. In some periods when the belief was universal the effect on conduct appears to have been small; and in any case the man who refrains from wrong-doing for fear of punishment, and practises virtue in the hope of a reward, is governed by lower motives. It is, partly at least,

because the doctrine of external rewards and punishments involves an appeal to motives which are not pure, that this form of argument has lost force in recent times.

In contrast to the notion of an external administration of justice whereby compensation is awarded for wrongs endured and retribution given for sins committed in this world, the modern mind is more inclined to think of justice as a principle immanent in the social and individual life. Here and now there is a law of justice at work in the characters of men, a law silent but continuous in its operation. The man who abandons himself to sin suffers damage to his soul in consequence, while the man who devotes himself to the practice of virtue gains an abiding inward good. The working of this immanent justice is in no way dependent on the will of any individual: the good man cannot help gaining, nor the bad man help losing, what is of most value in life. We do not lay ourselves open to the charge of appealing to impure motives, when we regard this gain and loss, not as an outward retribution imposed on men, but as the reaction of their own deeds upon themselves: it is the inner consequence of what by their deeds they have made themselves to be. In this sense an individual is fully justified in making the foreseen results of his action a motive to virtue rather

than vice. He is blameworthy if he fails to do so, and his motive if he does so is ethically pure.

In regard to the reality of the principle of immanent justice there need be no doubt. The problem remains, however, whether the principle works itself out so adequately in this world, that the claim on the score of justice to a life beyond the present has neither meaning nor point. Is all the justice that is necessary already realised in human characters and their destinies within the historic process? Can we say that every man, when measured by the inward test, gets his due in this life? It is no argument in favour of the affirmative to point out, that the good man who suffers for his integrity finds a truer satisfaction in himself and in his lot than he could have found in any 'happier' state which was gained by yielding to lower motives. Any complete view of human good implies a union of virtue and happiness or well-being. We could not say, for example, that a full good was attained by an individual of high character whose fruitful activity was constantly thwarted by adverse circumstances, or whose life was prematurely cut short by death. A coincidence of virtue and happiness there must be, if goodness is to receive its due; but the facts of experience only warrant us in affirming there is a certain tendency towards this coincidence in

the world.[1] On the other hand, it would be easy to prove that human history shows us very many cases of serious discrepancy between the two. How often does it happen that the keenest suffering and the most acute misery are brought on men and women by the sins of others, and not by any fault of their own! From the days of Job the case of the innocent sufferer has been a problem. The great European War, with its countless tragedies, furnishes a terrible illustration. But the proposition needs no illustration: every honest mind will acknowledge its truth. Indeed I should not care to say that a recent writer has overstated the case when he remarks: "We can hardly help feeling that if what we see of the ways of God with man on this earth is all that there ever will be to see, Justice counts for very little in His dealings."[2] Even on the most generous view of the facts, we cannot maintain that the theory of an immanent justice fully realised on earth covers, or nearly covers, all the experiences of life. There is so much in human experience which contradicts this idea, that it is not plausible. Nor does it really help us to take refuge in the thought that, though goodness and well-being have been widely separated in the past,

[1] Cp. Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii. p. 217.

[2] Professor A. E. Taylor in his essay on "Immortality" in the volume entitled *Faith and the War*, p. 146.

still the world is advancing to a condition in which the division will be healed. Experience does not justify this optimism, and the future progress of the race is not an assured truth. Even if it were, the happiness of a section of the race in its later evolution could not undo or neutralise all the unmerited suffering of the past, or heal the wounds of that great company who have passed away "not having received the promise."

We seem then to be confronted with a great alternative. We may say, and say frankly, that justice and the other ethical values do not count in the organisation of the universe, for the universe must be interpreted on purely naturalistic lines. But in this case we have to meet the insuperable difficulties which beset any attempt to find the ultimate explanation of the higher in the lower. If we refuse to accept the conclusion, we are driven to the other alternative. In other words, we endorse the claim of justice as a spiritual value, and declare that its imperfect realisation here calls for its full realisation hereafter. In that case we shall agree with Bishop Butler, that in the end justice will be done: "All shall be set right at the final distribution of things. It is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good under the conduct and administration of a perfect mind."[1] This means that we must postu-

[1] Third sermon on *Human Nature*.

late the persistence of the personal life after the death of the body, for it is in living persons that the ethical values are realised. And in this connexion we recall the thought of Plato, that there is a purifying and educating discipline of souls in a world beyond the present. We may even claim that the present order of things can only be regarded as reasonable in the large sense of the term, if it leads up to a higher form of being which corrects and supplements what is imperfect in the present order.

II. The second form of the ethical argument takes its departure from the acknowledged incompleteness of man's moral life, and goes on to postulate the continuance and completion of that life after death. Man as a moral being experiences a discrepancy between his ideal and his achievement: he struggles after a goal, but the goal always lies beyond him; and there is a felt contradiction in the thought that it is the nature of man to develop ideals which, in the nature of things, cannot be realised. Why, it is asked, should there emerge in the evolution of the world a being with this high outlook, if his meaning and destiny lay wholly within the mundane order of things? If man's end is purely earthly, why does he not find a full and final satisfaction in earthly goods? There is a disparity between man's ethical and spiritual equipment and the purely

mundane conception of his vocation. Were man's destiny merely earthly, one would expect in his case something similar to what obtains in the animal kingdom. The animal has no outlook beyond its natural environment, and the impulses, instincts, and arrangements of the animal world refer exclusively to the conservation of the individual and the species. Were this true of the human race, then the evidence would certainly tell against a belief in personal immortality. But man is decisively differentiated from the animals. And if he is condemned to pursue ideals which the scope of his earthly life precludes him from attaining, it is only reasonable to expect that room will somehow be given for their attainment.

I shall begin the discussion of this aspect of the argument by a short statement and examination of the form in which it was presented by Kant. The proof of immortality, like that of freedom and of God, Kant derived from the practical reason. He regards the Moral Law with the implied notion of duty as a pure *a priori* principle of the practical reason or will, and he decisively rejects the theory which bases morality on utilitarian or hedonistic considerations. The moral law takes form as a categorical imperative, a principle of universal obligation, which demands from the individual a reverence and obedience into which neither considerations of expediency

nor desire for happiness dare enter. The moral law must be the sole motive of good action: motives based on sensuous feelings and desires cannot give moral conduct as Kant understood it. On the other hand, when Kant came to determine the nature of the Chief Good, he saw that happiness could not be excluded, if the *Summum Bonum* was to be a *complete* Good. Now "happiness is that state of a rational being in the world in which he finds everything in the whole of his existence ordered in conformity with his wish and will."[1] The question then arises, how the moral reason is to achieve the ideal. For man is a sensuous as well as a rational being, and the will to good in him is constantly hampered and thwarted by feelings and desires which—so Kant believed — must be non-moral in their character. Obviously man is not capable of achieving at any given moment that perfect accordance of the will with the moral law in which holiness consists. But this perfection is practically necessary; if it is to be realised, it can only be realised gradually, and it implies a progress *ad infinitum.* "Now, this endless progress is only possible on the supposition of the *endless* duration of the *existence* and personality of the same rational being. . . . The *summum bonum*, then, practically, is only possible on the supposition of

[1] *Vide* Caird's *Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii. p. 295.

the immortality of the soul; consequently this immortality, being inseparably connected with the moral law, is a postulate of pure practical reason."[1]

Such, in bare outline, is Kant's ethical proof. It has been much criticised, and in various ways it is open to criticism. For instance, an immortality based on endless progress in time assumes the reality of time; and Kant in his epistemology treats time as a form of intuition which is purely phenomenal in its reference: it has no application to the noumenal or real world. Moreover, the extreme antagonism in which he sets the intelligible and the sensuous realms, and his identification of desire with desire for pleasure, import a dualism into human nature. It is hard to see how the moral ideal could be realised in human experience even by the way of a continuous progress in time. But the Kantian argument, despite its inconsistencies, contains true and valuable thoughts; and it is possible to disentangle the questionable elements and to reconstruct it in a form which is less open to criticism. In this connexion we can discard the Kantian view of time as a form of intuition valid only for the phenomenal world, and we may properly reject the idea that feeling and desire must be excluded from the moral consciousness.

[1] Abbot's translation of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, pp. 218–219.

Having set aside these elements of the Kantian theory, we have still to consider the significance of the moral ideal. It is a demand, as Kant saw, for the realisation of the highest Good, and we have to examine this fact in its bearing on human experience. The reality and pressure of the ideal are evident: the ideal is operative in man's knowledge that he is never all that he ought to be. The moral life is a struggle on man's part to be better than he is, and the struggle never closes in the consciousness of a full and final attainment. Though the spirit be willing the flesh is weak, and the upward endeavour of the individual is time and again impeded by the intrusion of selfish feelings and desires. When we 'would do good evil is present with us,' and man never succeeds in giving a full and satisfying expression to what is best in him.

> "What hand and brain went ever paired?
> What heart alike conceived and dared?
> What act proved all its thought had been?
> What will but felt the fleshly screen?"

Men who have begun the moral struggle in earnest never, even at the end of the day, win a complete victory over the lower nature; and to the last they are haunted by the feeling of shortcoming. We are confronted with a radical incompleteness in the spiritual life of persons. The individual is a centre of value, and it may be

of growing value. But there is no perfection, and the actual does not coalesce with the ideal. Though, like the apostle of old, the human pilgrim press steadily forward, yet he never reaches a point in his journey when he can count himself to have attained. The best men are haunted by the shadow of failure, yet in this very sense of failure the power of the ideal is revealed. To many the thought of another life is welcome just because it seems to offer them an opportunity of gaining the good which they have here failed to gain.

The endeavour after a full and satisfying good must have a significance for human life as a whole. For it is from no arbitrary caprice or casual desire that man sets out on this quest and engages in this endeavour. His inner nature urges him to follow the upward way; and if he turns into the downward path, his conscience rebukes him for being false to his vocation. We have to ask ourselves the question, Is man by the spirit in him led to enter on a quest which is bound to be vain and doomed to end in defeat? Is the vision of the Good only a phantom light which lures the pilgrim into the morass? Is the goal fondly desired only a dream which fades in the sober light of waking reason? No one will come to an affirmative conclusion gladly, and if any one does so conclude, it must be at the expense of

admitting that there is somehow a contradiction at the heart of things. For, consider what the conclusion means. It means that it is involved in the nature of man—and so in the constitution of the universe in which man comes into being—that he should form and strive after an ideal of good, and that it is equally involved in the nature of things that this endeavour is destined to final defeat. The situation would be analogous to that where an individual bestowed a precious gift, and at the same time took measures to render the possession of the gift ineffective. We cannot accept such an inconsistency in the constitution of the world unless we are compelled to do so by a logic which admits of no other alternative. Any reasonable hypothesis which enables us to overcome this inconsistency, and to harmonise our experience, has a serious claim to be considered.

From this point of view we can see that the postulate of personal immortality is no mere expression of subjective feelings. It is not the pure outcome of a personal wish, but issues from the need of harmonising the facts of experience. The postulate is put forward to remove a real difficulty: it is a demand man makes on the universe in order that his moral world may be consistent and harmonious. Apart from this postulate the life of moral endeavour is destined

to remain fragmentary and incomplete—nay more, the value already realised in the ethical life is doomed to be lost. All the good which a man has reaped in his own soul as the harvest of his moral endeavour will be annihilated when he ceases to breathe, and his career will close in darkness and silence. The postulate of immortality conserves the value already gained, and is a guarantee that the endeavour after the good shall come to its goal and fulfilment. These ends are not achieved within the present world-order, where the personal life is fragmentary; hence the postulate of a supramundane or transcendental realm in which the personal life is continued and fulfilled. This postulate is the legitimate claim man makes on the universe, and it is the solution of an urgent problem.

At the stage we have reached we can see that the two forms of the ethical argument tend to meet and coalesce. The notions of justice and of completion come together in the conception of a teleological development of the personal life to its consummation in the transcendent world. For the soul, through this development, comes to its due and reaches its fulfilment. The principle of retribution finds a place, yet in no external or mechanical fashion. For the life to come issues out of the life here, and the soul is what it has made itself to be. The upward struggle which

is broken short on earth is 'completed, not undone.'

The line of thought we have been developing has been criticised on various grounds. It may help to set the principles for which we are contending in a clearer light, if we consider briefly one or two of these objections.

This form of the ethical argument, it is said, implies an exaggerated other-worldliness. It points men away from the domain of common experience, and is touched by the spirit of the Middle Age, when people spoke of time as the 'anteroom of Eternity.' The objection, however, in this case is not really relevant. For the transcendent world is conceived as teleologically related to life in the present world, and man's conduct and character here go to fashion his destiny hereafter. If we regard what takes place in this life, then the future has, and ought to have, an intimate bearing on the present. Purposive endeavour which has reference to the future is bound up with the very structure of life. And more especially so in a being with 'forward looking thoughts,' who is constantly relating what is to what is to be. If we have recourse to analogy, we can see that it is possible to relate the future to the present, so that the present is in no way emptied of its worth and significance. Youth, for instance, has a value and character of

its own, and it has its own peculiar part to play in human experience. The young have their own special interests and ideals, and they make their own contribution to the life of society. Yet, this notwithstanding, youth is charged with a significant reference to the future, and comes to its fulfilment in the mature man and fully equipped citizen. To reach its goal, youth itself has to pass away. This analogy furnishes us with a clue to the mode in which we may conceive the relation of personality in the temporal world to its fruition in the transcendent world. In both cases the goal gives a new depth of meaning to the earlier stage, without at the same time robbing that stage of its own interest and value.

The objection is stated in a more subtle form when it is argued that the other world is just the ideal truth or reality of this world. This theory has been persuasively stated by able thinkers. The other world, they tell us, the world of truth, of good and beauty, is not something beyond this world but immanent in it. "'This' world and the 'other' world are continuous and inseparable, and all men must live in some degree for both."[1] Or, as another writer has put it, "The temporal life is the phenomenal form of a life which is eternal as such."[2] Let us begin by acknowledg-

[1] Bosanquet, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 98.
[2] Paulsen, *System of Ethics*, Eng. trans., p. 440.

ing an element of truth in this view. The conception of the world as an externally related system of elements is a superficial conception: it must be corrected and deepened by showing the presence and activity within experience of self-conscious mind. A silent process of ideal construction goes to the making of the world as it presents itself to us in our daily life. It is a fallacy to suppose the external world as we know it is a complete fact by itself, and the function of mind merely to report on it and try to understand it. In this sense we agree that the ordinary outlook on things is superficial and inadequate, and a deeper analysis shows that spiritual factors co-operate in making our world. On the other hand, we deny that the 'other world' is simply the spiritual world which is immanent and operative in the world of common experience. Were this so, man ought to be able to reach his full and final self-realisation within the present world-order. There could be no enlargment of the scope and character of man's life, for it is entirely bounded by the horizon of this world. No transformation of its material basis would be possible; at most there would be the correction of the superficial view of things by the recognition of those spiritual elements which underlie experience, and lend it its deeper meaning. Not to transcend the world, but to apprehend it more truly, would

be man's goal. But if this were all, the perplexities and anomalies of the present order of the world would still remain, and would be felt with the same force. All those unsatisfied needs in human experience which give point and vigour to the demand for the completion of the personal life in a supramundane sphere would remain unfulfilled. Even if the ideal world is immanent in the actual, the fact remains that the actual world is not a moral cosmos: it is not a world in which moral justice reigns supreme. If you accept the theory under review as adequate, you can do nothing to remove those difficulties which oppress the moral consciousness. For these reasons we cannot think a solution of the moral problem can be given, if we reduce the transcendent world to an immanent aspect of this world.

But, it may be said, are you entitled to lay so much stress on the moral argument? Granted there are anomalies in the moral situation, yet does not life in a transcendent world present difficulties? On reflexion, may we not find that the difficulties we create in this way are as many as those we seek to obviate? This is true in the sense that any attempt to give concrete form and detail to the conception of the future life will call forth more or less relevant objections and criticisms. But such an attempt may well transcend

human powers, and we are under no obligation to make it: we confine ourselves to the postulate that there must somehow be a transcendent completion of this life, and find the postulate a sufficient solution of the problem. If the demand seems a large one, the reasons for making the demand are urgent and weighty. The existence of ethical personality is a fact of paramount importance, and it rightly claims that the laws which are at work in the world should be in harmony with its judgments. The discord would be an unbearable one, if the natural and moral world were at variance. In the circumstances we are entitled to lay stress on the existence of ethical personality as a thing of supreme significance: it cannot be evolved from lower elements. An inner personal life dedicated to the realisation of ethical ends and ideals is a centre of value with which no material object deserves for a moment to be compared. The growth and expanding outlook of this personality which finally, in correspondence with its inner worth, demands a fulfilment in a transcendent sphere, is deeply suggestive. The moral and spiritual demands of the personal life have as great a claim on consideration as those of the theoretical reason, and scepticism in the one case would be as fatal as in the other. To distrust the working of my moral consciousness is as

subversive as to distrust the working of my intellect: in the end it leads to sheer scepticism. Hence the demand that the moral and spiritual values have objective validity, and a place and function in the real universe. In a rational universe the real and the good must be connected and unified, so that they may co-operate harmoniously in the teleological development of personal lives.

Bound up with the claim of the ethical values to enter into the texture of the real world, is the claim that these values should be conserved. They must partake of the enduring nature of reality. One cannot acquiesce in the thought that the good should grow, flourish for a little, and then fade and die. It must have an enduring vitality of which natural organisms are destitute. If value is to be conserved, then the personal beings who are the active centres and supports of value must also be conserved. But if there is no immortality, if the personal life flickers out with the dissolution of the body, the conclusion is inevitable that value is constantly being lost. And this because the value that is in character perishes: the growing good realised in a human life is lost and dissipated when the organic process runs out. If this view be accepted, the melancholy conclusion follows, that all the toil and travail of the human spirit in bringing the spiritual values

to flower and fruit will not avail to save them from annihiliation. The end of man and the brute alike is dust and ashes, for "man has no pre-eminence over the brute."

Depressing to most people is the idea that the good enjoys only a brief and uncertain tenure of existence. They feel it contradictory that what is highest and best should be a fugitive appearance. Hence it is sometimes argued the conservation of values is not necessarily bound up with the conservation of personal lives. These values are produced, it is admitted, by individuals, but once they have come into being they are taken up and sustained by the wider life of society, and thus continue to "live and act and serve the future hour." The work of art endures and gives pleasure long after the hands which shaped it have mouldered into dust: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." So with great poetry; its creator passes away, but his creation becomes part of the treasure of the race and a joy of many generations. In the same way the value of a human personality is not lost; it continues to be an influence for good when the individual has vanished, for it is taken up into the growing heritage of society. To put it in a word, the good in the individual lives on, for it becomes an element in the growing good of the world. This, no doubt, is an argument which has influenced many, and it appeals

to certain unselfish instincts in human nature. To merge all personal desires in the supreme desire for the well-being of the race seems a noble thing. On the other hand, the argument makes certain assumptions, and these are, to say the least, of doubtful validity.

(*a*) If the good which the individual himself is, is to be conserved by the race, then that good must receive outward expression in some form in order to enter into the racial inheritance. But the individual never attains a full and perfect expression of himself. A man's acts reveal him, but not completely. He is more than the sum of his acts; and there are depths in his nature which do not find articulate utterance. Hence, even if an immortality of influence were possible, there would still be a loss in value when a pure and good personality passed out of the world. The only assurance against loss is the conservation of the personality itself.

(*b*) In the second place, if the social system or the race is to be the ultimate repository and conserver of all values, we seem to be driven to postulate its permanence or immortality. A corporate must take the place of an individual immortality. But, as has been pointed out, an immortality of the race, all of whose constituent elements are mortal, is something like a contradiction in terms. Out of a multitude of

impermanencies you cannot evolve a permanency. Though the race has outlasted millions upon millions of individuals, there is no guarantee that it will continue to do so indefinitely. In truth, the probabilities point in the opposite direction. Beyond all question our earth was for ages unfitted for human habitation, and the appearance of man on its surface only dates from a relatively late period in its history. There was a time when mankind did not exist, and there will in all likelihood come a time when it will cease to exist. Even if human history is not cut short by some cosmic catastrophe, physical science tells us that conditions favourable for life on earth will not endure for ever. It is probable that the diminution of the sun's heat will steadily continue, inducing a condition of things on our globe increasingly unfavourable to life. The consequence will be the gradual deterioration and final extinction of human and animal organisms. It may require long ages to bring about the relapse of our world into darkness and silence, but the persistence of the human race would only be possible if the earth always continued a suitable dwelling-place for man. Not only is there no guarantee of this, but it is not intrinsically likely. The hope, therefore, that the values created by mortal individuals will somehow be conserved by the race is futile. The conclusion is inevitable, that if we abandon

faith in personal immortality, we thereby sacrifice any assurance of the final persistence and victory of the good. Man with the good he has won by the travail of his soul becomes only a transient episode in the vast cosmic process. And when this process reaches a point in its downward movement, all life will finally perish.

It will help to confirm the line of thought just developed, if I go on to point out difficulties which are involved in the idea that the goal and end of human endeavour are to be found in society and the race. I shall leave out of account for the moment the objection drawn from the mortality of the race itself, though that objection is, I think, fully justified. What I now wish to show is, that you cannot consistently conceive the race to be the ultimate end of the individual. You can give no satisfying statement of the goal of moral endeavour in terms of an earthly society. The attempt to give such a statement becomes entangled in difficulties. Let us see how this is so.

If society is to be the ethical end of the individual, then the social system must be conceived as a sufficient end or goal. But there is the same discrepancy between the ideal and the actual in the case of society as in that of the individual. All mundane societies are imperfect, and an imperfect system cannot be a perfect

ethical end. Societies like persons are in process of development; and so long as there is development, there is not completeness or perfection. It would seem then that for society as it is we must substitute an *ideal* society, if we are to have an adequate ethical end for the individual. Shall we say then, that the goal and ultimate ideal of personal endeavour is a perfect society on earth, in which development has reached its term? I think not. A state of static perfection, a condition of society which left no room for effort or aspiration, would be totally out of keeping with human nature as we know it. The ethical life as it takes form on earth is essentially a life of purposive endeavour, and a mode of existence which left no place for this would not be the best. Human character and human powers, as they have developed under terrestrial conditions, are such that a life without progress, a life with no goal beyond the present, is a life which has ceased to be desirable. Accordingly a perfect society on earth cannot be the goal and end of human persons. Moreover, this ideal, even were it practicable, could only mark the close of a long development; and this involves the insuperable objection, that generation after generation would be doomed to toil for a good it was never to share. This good would be the monopoly of those who came late in time.

But if a static goal to social development on earth is untenable, the ideal, it may be said, is just progress itself. To go on improving things is an adequate motive for mortals. The individual man has his sufficient ethical end in working for the progress of the society in which he lives. There is no need, so our critic may say, of conceiving the developmental process as reaching its term at any fixed point in time. It goes on indefinitely, and man gains his true self-fulfilment in contributing to the forward movement. At every point in the historic process an individual realises the ideal possible for him, when he strives to leave society better than he found it.

At first blush this might appear a plausible solution of the problem before us. Further reflexion reveals certain flaws in the theory. In the first place, what assurance is there that society will always make progress? It is an utter mistake to suppose that a social system or the race naturally and necessarily develops, so that one can depend on its progress just as you can depend on the growth of a plant or a tree. Society is always changing, or, if you like, evolving; it is not constantly developing. Progress is no movement that proceeds with mechanical regularity: it is born of the inwardness of free personalities, and it stands for a

vocation or ideal which men are called, but not compelled, to fulfil. Looking out on human history we see societies developing, others stagnant, and some in process of decay. And in the lifetime of a social system a period of progress may be followed by one of decline or of arrested development. So at least the empirical evidence leads us to conclude. It may be said that retrogression is only apparent: on a wider view it falls within the movement of progress. This, we reply, may be true in some cases, but there is no proof that it is always so, and much evidence to the contrary. The view appears to rest, not on the data of history, but on the dogmatic opinion that progress is continuous and necessary. "There must be progress; therefore what seems to be a decline is, in the end, an element in progress." The argument is, of course, vitiated by its faulty premises.

If you abandon the notion that progress is universal and necessary, and still define the ideal as progress, you must face the question how you are to determine what is progress. For plainly you will often be called on to distinguish real from apparent progress, and to give reasons for your decision. It frequently happens that a movement which one section of society hails as an advance another regards as a decline. The individual has to be assured where progress lies,

that he may know how to act in given circumstances. Now progress is a value-idea, and presupposes a criterion or standard of value in the light of which given cases are judged. To put it quite simply: if you are to determine whether a certain movement is forward or backward, you can only decide, if you are given a fixed point or goal by reference to which you judge or measure the movement. Otherwise there can be no consistency of judgment: one man will decide in one way, and another in a different way. Accordingly, if you persist in taking progress pure and simple for the ideal, it will be at the expense of abandoning universality and coherency of opinion. General agreement will be impossible, and relativity of judgment will prevail. In this case people will fall back on the method of judging one historic movement with reference to another and declaring that *relatively* it exhibits progress. Evidently sound and valid conclusions cannot be reached by a method like this. Subjective feelings and interests will prevail, and where one man discerns progress another will read the tokens of decay. Where there is no standard there can be no consistency of judgment, for there is no valid way of correcting error.

The endeavour, therefore, to find in society the ultimate ethical end for persons leads to an *impasse*. On the one hand, the conception of a

perfect society under terrestrial conditions would not be the ideal for men as they are at present constituted. And, on the other hand, the goal as social progress is hampered with the difficulty that, apart from a final end or ideal good as standard, it is impossible to define progress, or to say when and where it exists. In a word, a standard is needed, and yet a mundane standard will not work.

The difficulty in giving a final form to the moral ideal has been traced to the fact that morality is not itself an absolute and final form of activity, but has its issue and consummation in religion. This is true so far, though much depends on the meaning we give to religion. But we shall only reach a solution of the moral problem through religion, if it be frankly recognised that the movement of the religious consciousness is directed to a transcendent world, and has its full realisation there. This means that the goal to the ethical progress of mankind cannot be stated in terms of any form of earthly existence at all. Here is the secret of the inconsistencies which beset every attempt to do so. The final end of progress is in the supramundane realm.

When we make a postulate of this kind, we may expect to be asked how the transition from the mundane to the supramundane is achieved.

One cannot suppose that a miraculous transformation of human society is to take place at some point in its temporal evolution. To try to solve the problem thus is to ignore where the real pressure of the difficulty lies. The solution will rather be found in the recognition of the supreme value of human personality. Social good is a legitimate motive of human endeavour, but the well-being of human society is not the ultimate end of personal spirits. Indeed there is a sense in which ethical and spiritual personality is the end of social development. Society is not an end but a means, a means to the unfolding of personal lives ; and the measure of the value of a social system will be found in the character of the persons who compose it. Accordingly it is through the nature and meaning of personality that we have to interpret the relation of the temporal to the transcendent world. In a word, the inner worth of the human soul leads to the postulate of immortality ; and it is the conception of immortality which enables us to solve the problem of the meaning of progress and the goal of social development. The transition from the lower to the higher order of being is achieved in and through the personal life which survives the crisis of death, and goes on to its completion and fulfilment in the transcendent world. Society, in ministering to personal development, becomes in

the end a means to the realisation of a transcendent good in personal lives.

This doctrine, it will be said, ignores the fact that society must often be the end to the individual, and it sets up a purely individualistic conception of human good. It encourages an individual to regard society as a serviceable means to his own development. Now it is important there should be no misunderstanding on the subject, and some explanation is desirable.

From one point of view society is an end to the individual, and from another point of view it is a means. Man is a social being, and to ignore the good of others and to pursue his own selfish interests simply, is fatal to his true well-being. To labour for the common good is the true spirit of the citizen, and the right way to the growth and enrichment of the personal life. In this aspect society is an end to the individual, an end apart from which he cannot realise the fulness of his nature. For his inner life man wins a content from his social environment. In a deeper sense, however, and from an ultimate point of view, the personal and ethical life is the end of society, and society is the means to its development. A social system is the medium in which personal life develops through interaction with other persons, while the growing individual reacts on the social system and helps to promote its pro-

gress. Hence great historic advances can be traced back to the initiative of individuals. But the progress which society makes through the free activity of individuals is in turn reflected in the lives of its members. The final test of the value of a given social system, or of a particular type of civilisation, will not be found in impersonal institutions: it will be revealed in the personal character of the citizens. Social good, if real, must be mirrored in personal lives, and it will be tested by them. Accordingly the remark is true, that if we are to form an idea of the highest earthly culture, it can only be by universalising that which we see realised in the most perfect persons.[1]

In the light of this statement we can therefore conclude, that society and its development are not an end in themselves; in the last resort they are a means to the evolution of personal and ethical spirits. No earthly society can be the embodiment of a perfect good; at most it can reveal a growing good, and while the world lasts the structure of society will be subject to change. But society in its evolution in time is continuously realising its purpose, when it ministers to the development of the ethical and spiritual life in persons who pass to their goal and fulfilment in the transcendent world. When and how historic

[1] I. H. Fichte, *Seelenfortdauer*, p. 414.

development on earth will come to a close is not a question of supreme importance. The temporal process, so far as we can see, will not reach any ideal fulfilment. The historic movement is ever reaching its end in the persons for whom life here is a stage to life hereafter. In the doctrine of immortality the problems of the conservation of values and of the meaning and goal of social development find their solution. There are no doubt many things in human experience which the conception of man's immortality leaves unexplained, and we do not put it forward as a general principle of explanation. But the postulate removes some of the contradictions of experience, softens what is harsh in the human lot, and gives coherency to man's outlook on life.

The claim to an existence after death is a great claim, but human personality is a great and supremely important fact. And this must be our final justification for making the claim. On some of the unique features of personality I have already insisted. Persons are the creators and sustainers of the world of values, and the realms of ethics and spiritual religion are the outcome of personal life. Apart from a society of persons, goodness and value become abstractions: impersonal forces are in the end non-moral forces. The movement of history on a large view is a

movement through individuality to personality, and finally to fully formed ethical and spiritual personality. As man's personality has developed his outlook on the world and life has widened. And, finally, he has laid claim to a destiny beyond this mundane sphere. It is the unique character of the moral and spiritual life of persons, and the paramount importance of the values which are bound up with personalities, that give weight and urgency to the demand for a life after death. The expanding vision of the personal consciousness has finally taken form in the faith that the goal of personal spirits transcends this earthly form of being. This faith reveals the consciousness of the inner worth and riches of the human soul—the soul which finds the world a stage too narrow for the full unfolding of its powers.

The previous discussions have shown us converging lines of thought which lead to the postulate of immortality. The demands of moral justice, as well as the incompleteness of man's moral achievement when contrasted with his ideal, call for a life beyond the present. Moreover, human society is not man's ultimate end, nor can social progress have an earthly consummation. The conclusion to which we come is, that the doctrine of personal immortality is an answer to difficulties and a fulfilment of needs which are

interwoven with the texture of human experience.

The doctrine is, as I have tried to show, an ethical postulate, a postulate which makes the world of our experience a more reasonable world. At the same time, we must bear in mind that a postulate is necessarily limited in its scope. In this instance our postulate of immortality does not give us information about the contents of the idea. Nor does it tell us how the idea is to be realised.[1] The moral consciousness gives us no warrant to speak with certitude on these matters. As we saw in the previous chapter, speculative thought has offered suggestions in this reference, but it is not in a position to make dogmatic statements. Those who venture to speak dogmatically forget the limitations of human knowledge, and they usually entangle themselves in misleading analogies. In this connection it is well to remember the reserve of Christ. He drew no picture of the life to come, but warned men against conceiving the heavenly world in terms of this world. Whatever the future life may be, it cannot be a mere replica of this life. Indeed it is only because immortality implies the transformation of the present material form of existence, that it offers a solution of the problems we have been discussing.

[1] Cp. on this point F. C. S. Schiller's *Humanism*, p. 264.

But though we refuse to dogmatise, one or two things most of us will feel are needed, if the life to come is to have value for us. The transcendent state of being cannot be a solitary state; it must be life in a society, in a kingdom of spirits. The fulness of personality can never be realised in isolation; and to many a lonely immortality would be an object of dread. As a matter of feeling, the desire for immortality is hardly ever a selfish desire. Most persons who desire a life beyond the present do so, because they long that those tender ties and affections, which are the core of what is best in man's earthly estate, should not be obliterated by death, but should be renewed in a 'better world.' Many feel strongly that if these were finally destroyed, their personality would lose elements of value that could not be replaced. A life in which love had no part would be poor. Hence the longing that the immortal life should be a social life.

Again, we note the human recoil against the prospect of an eternal fixity of being. Such a condition is destitute of any human interest. A transcendent world which excluded all progress would not be desirable for us as we are now constituted; it would only be acceptable if our nature were transformed into something quite different from what it is at present. In that case there could be little continuity between our present

and our future life. But speculations about the conditions and character of life hereafter are in the main unprofitable. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," and the world to come has to be experienced to be known. Immortality is the object of faith, not of sight, but it is a faith which can give a reason for itself.

CHAPTER VI

IMMORTALITY AND THE RELIGIOUS VIEW OF THE WORLD

IN the present chapter I wish to complete the discussion of the problem of immortality by considering its place and meaning in the religious view of the world. The slightest examination shows that the idea of immortality stands in a vital relation to religion, and in its character the idea corresponds to the degree of development of the religious consciousness. A rude religion has low ideas of a future life, and the higher the religion the higher the ideas. The progressive moralisation of the conception of God and the religious relation has gradually purified and elevated the conception of the world to come. Though eschatology is one of the most conservative aspects of religion, it cannot remain unmodified by the process of spiritual development. The old may persist for a time in a changed religious environment, but it cannot do so permanently.

The notion of a future life grew up under the

ægis of religion, and became an essential element of religious faith. And because it was a recognised religious belief it became an object of philosophical and ethical reflexion. It was owing to the fact that religion had put forward the doctrine of man's future destiny, that the belief acquired a currency and a status which made it an inevitable problem for reflective thought. Philosophy did not of itself evolve the problem, but found it to hand. In consequence, we observe that every important philosophical system has had something to say on the question, whether by way of confirming, rejecting, or criticising the belief. In the two preceding chapters we have noted the general results of philosophical and ethical thinking on the subject. Not from the speculative but from the ethical standpoint the most positive and convincing argument was developed. Immortality, we concluded, was a legitimate postulate put forward by the moral consciousness, which claimed that the world should be a moral cosmos. In other words, the postulate was necessary in order to give consistency and harmony to the facts of experience regarded from an ethical point of view. The argument has undoubted weight, but in one aspect there is a lack of finality about it. Is it not possible, it may be said, that, in the end, the facts of experience cannot be made perfectly coherent and consistent? The universe may not

be a moral cosmos. And though we postulate a principle to harmonise the facts, what guarantee have we that the principle is in actual operation? After all, to show that a thing ought to be is not to prove that it *actually* is. Obviously something is needed to carry us from the bare postulate to the realisation of the principle for which the postulate stands. To pass from the one to the other implies an act of faith in the moral reasonableness of the universe in which men live and act. And though the grounds for affirming this are cogent, it may still be denied. Moral scepticism is an ugly thing, but it is possible.

If the universe is to be vindicated as a sphere in which ethical principles are realised, the vindication must proceed on the assumption that the ultimate ground of things is ethical in its character. A non-moral Ground of the universe implies that there can be no assurance good is persistent and dominant, and will be the final goal of ill. It means there is no pledge that there is justice at the heart of things. On the other hand, if the character of the ultimate Source of things is ethical, then ethical principles must govern the process of development within the world. In short, an ethical and spiritual Ground of the world is the assurance and security for the presence and victorious activity of ethical and spiritual elements within the realm of human

experience. That is to say, an ethical and spiritual God, from Whom the world proceeds and upon Whom all experience depends, is the sufficient reason that the moral demands man makes on the universe will find an adequate response in the universe. Faith, then, in the moral character of the universe in which men live and act becomes, when we think out its implications, faith in the moral character of God. God is the Ground both of the natural and spiritual order, and He is our final assurance that the natural and spiritual realms fall within a teleological whole of which the supreme end is the Good. Apart from this there is no guarantee that the natural is subordinated to the moral order and subserves its development. Now faith in an ethical God is just the central fact of developed religion. When, therefore, immortality is claimed on ethical grounds, the demand must lead up to and find support through a religious faith in God, the Supreme Reality and the Power that works for righteousness. A God who is the source and consummation of all value cannot consistently be regarded as indifferent to the ethical values realised in human experience, or willing that they should vanish away and 'leave not a rack behind.' Hence an American writer — Mr. Fiske — has spoken of immortality as "a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." You can

only expect immortality on the score of rational justice, if, to borrow an expression from Carlyle, 'the great Soul of the world is just.'

Enough has perhaps been said to show in a general way the vital or organic relation in which belief in immortality stands to the religious consciousness. I wish, however, to bring out the scope and significance of this fact by a somewhat fuller and closer examination of the meaning of the religious relation. That relation, at every stage of its manifestation, involves the two factors of subject and object; and the religious consciousness expresses an act of belief or faith on the part of the subject in the object. In other words, religion signifies an act of faith on the part of the human spirit in a Being or beings which are divine. This faith is born of the sense of need and of the feeling of incompleteness and limitation which man vividly experiences. Could he find a full security and a perfect satisfaction within himself he would not be religious. The stress of life and its imperious needs impel man to seek help and security in a Power above himself. So religion as it is realised in human experience means fellowship and communion with the Divine: it is not absorption into the Divine, for in the religious relation neither of the constituent factors can be sacrificed to the other. It is, for example, psychologically false to say that

religion means the annihilation of the self and the extinction of the will, so that God alone may live and rule within us. In the religious consciousness the personality of man is expanded and uplifted as well as purified by fellowship with the Deity, but it is not merged in the Deity as pantheistic systems suggest. There is an immanence of the Divine in the human which, though it eludes definition, is not identification.

These, then, are the fundamental principles or constituent elements of the religious relationship, and they are present of necessity in every form and at every stage of religion. With the growth of culture the relation undergoes development and acquires a higher meaning: as man advances in self-consciousness, so does his conception of the Divine and of the bond that connects him with it make progress. Man's idea of God and of himself evolve *pari passu*, and a better society means better gods. The main tendency of religious development is from the natural to the spiritual, and progress in religion takes the form of making the religious relation more personal and inward, and so more truly universal. Or what is the same thing from a slightly different point of view, progress in religion manifests itself in the gradual liberation of the religious consciousness from material, local, and accidental associations, and in the establishment of its essential sphere in

the soul or inner life of man, where differences of race and place no longer count. The highest religion is the most universal religion, a religion in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, and the only test of piety is the worship of God in spirit and in truth. With the development of religion the beliefs and doctrines in which it expresses itself are refined and elevated. A truly spiritual faith discards the naturalistic beliefs which marked an earlier stage of its evolution. The process of change does not always proceed at the same pace, and some materials are more impervious than others to the solvent of new ideas. For example, the ritual or the eschatology of a religion may persist in an older form, though the other elements of the system have advanced beyond them. In this connexion Dr. Charles remarks: "The eschatology of a nation is always the last part of their religion to experience the transforming power of new ideas and new facts."[1] But no element can remain permanently uninfluenced by the process of development, and sooner or later must adjust itself to the changed environment. Hence the old and crude ideas about the nature of the soul and the spirit-world have to be recast in terms of an enlarged religious outlook. The primitive notions of survival after death have to undergo modification and expansion.

[1] *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 310.

Especially does the ethical conception of God react on the idea of immortality and infuse into it an ethical meaning. In Israel, for example, the influence of a pure monotheism guided religious faith slowly but surely to the moral conception of a future life. A religion which does not advance to the ethical idea of God has no urgent motive to purify and elevate its eschatology. On this point the contrast of Hebrew and Greek religion is suggestive.

From another side one can observe the influence of advancing religion in modifying the primitive ideas of the life after death. In all religions there is a reference, implicit or explicit, to a transcendent world. To put it more simply, every religion, however humble, means a belief in something *beyond* the immediate environment. Even in primitive religions this reference to the Beyond, though crude and rudimentary, is nevertheless present. In the rudest religion of nature the object of veneration is never a merely common object in man's external surroundings. If a material thing is selected for reverence, it is because there is something more in it than appears on the surface: it is the abode of a spirit, invisible yet possessing power. The tree or rock before which the savage performs his religious rites is an object of awe; for it is something better and more mysterious than a common tree or rock,

and therefore is worshipped. Thus while early religion finds its objects within the natural world, it looks beyond the outward appearance of the thing to an unseen source of power within it. From this elementary belief in something Beyond, the notion of divine transcendence developed. This idea of transcendence takes a more and more definite form with the progress of the religious consciousness. The divine powers gradually shake themselves free of their material abodes. The gods of national religion are higher than the spirits of the tribe: they are no longer envisaged in material things, and they are so far elevated above the world that they rule over departments of nature and human life. So in the evolution of Greek religion the spirits of the trees and springs were succeeded by the greater gods who dwelt apart on cloud-capped Olympus, from whence they presided over the destinies of mortals. This lingering connexion with the earth, which still characterised the Olympic religion, is dissolved when faith rises to a more truly spiritual conception of the Divine. In early Hebrew religion Jahveh, the covenant-God, had his abode on Sinai, and was the God of the land where his people dwelt. But in the monotheistic faith of the Hebrew prophets Jahveh was no longer a local Deity: He was exalted above the world and was the God of all nations. In a fully developed

spiritual religion like Christianity the Deity does not dwell in temples made with hands: He is not contained in nature or limited by it: He transcends nature. There is, no doubt, a sense in which God is immanent as well as transcendent; but a true idea of the divine immanence presupposes a full recognition of the divine transcendence. The conception of a Deity who transcends the spatially extended universe is the outcome of the long evolution of religious experience, and it is the expression of a tendency which underlies the whole movement of religious faith.

The recognition of the divine transcendence has necessarily exerted an influence on the conception of the goal and destiny of man and the race. The religious outlook on the world is essentially teleological, and the religious mind works in terms of ends and destinies. The religious system of ends leads up to and reaches its ground in God, the supreme End. All lesser ends and values find their goal and consummation in the supreme End and Value, and this Value and End religion identifies with God. But when a pure spiritual faith looks to a transcendent God, it follows that it will conceive the destiny of man to lie in a transcendent world. The issue of this movement is the general conception of a supramundane order which contrasts with the terrestrial order, and it is

in the supramundane sphere that the eternal life is thought to be realised. This is notably the standpoint of the Christian, who lays stress on the transitory character of earthly things and looks to a goal beyond them. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Hence the injunction, "Set your affections on things above." The supramundane outlook of Christian eschatology follows from the Christian conception of God; for if God transcends the world, then the destiny of the souls who worship God must be with Him in the transcendent world. Moreover, if man, as spiritual religion teaches, is a partaker of the divine nature, it is inconsistent to suppose he can reach his goal on earth and enter upon eternal life under earthly conditions. For this would mean that the chief end of man comes short of a full fellowship with God.

The organic relation in which the conception of God stands to that of immortality is apparent from the way a change in the former induces a corresponding change in the latter. This is patent when the transcendent side of the Divine Nature is sacrificed, and Deity is conceived as purely immanent. A form of pantheism, for instance, which draws God wholly down into the world, and allows Him no being in and for Himself apart from the universe, is naturally hostile to the doctrine of personal immortality. Not

personal persistence after death, but the falling away of the illusion of individuality with consequent absorption in the universal life, is the logical conclusion which the premises of a pantheistic system yield. If man is only the appearance of the Absolute, there is no real basis for the survival of personality after death. It is a true generalisation, that when faith in a personal God becomes weak, faith in a personal immortality becomes halting and uncertain. Any theory which, like pantheism, diminishes the value of human personality, must, *ipso facto*, weaken the reasons for believing in a personal life after death. An illustration of this can be found in certain types of mysticism, where the communion of the soul with God tends to pass into the idea of an absorption into God. In such cases there is no boundary between the human and divine; the unique and distinctive element in personality dwindles away; and in the mystic consciousness the soul loses itself in the infinite fulness of God. Mysticism of this type does not lay stress on the persistence of the finite and personal consciousness: it rather emphasises the melting away of every finite element which hinders the soul from merging itself in the Infinite Life. Hence the tendency of some mystics to convert immortality into a present experience instead of a future consummation. One recalls in this connexion

the well-known utterance of Schleiermacher in the *Reden*: "In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite, and in every moment to be eternal, is the immortality of religion." The conclusion is that mysticism, in the degree that it approaches pantheism, undermines the value of man's distinctive personality and diminishes the assurance of its final persistence.

On the other hand, a pluralistic theory—a theory which resolves the universe into a multiplicity of finite centres, and so is diametrically opposed to pantheism—does not in itself prove a safeguard to immortality. A mere plurality of finite centres in interaction contains no definite assurance that they will work out the harmonious consummation of individual selves. As Professor Ward pertinently asks, What guarantee can we have on the basis of mere pluralism, that the different ideals of the different centres may not prove incompatible?[1] For mere plurality as such does not contain the ground of its own unity. This difficulty can only be overcome, if we modify this pluralism by the recognition that the multiplicity of finite centres forms a teleological whole of which the ultimate ground and final end is God. The coherence and unity of the many are assured when the teleological organisation of the units is established by their reference to God as living ground

[1] *Realms of Ends*, p. 421.

as well as controlling principle and end. An ethical God is the security for the harmonious working out of their destinies on the part of finite individuals. Neither in pantheism nor in pluralism, but in a genuine Theism, is the best support to the hope of human immortality. And this becomes more clear when we consider what the religious consciousness is really seeking after in its doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The end is certainly not mere persistence of being, for that in itself has no religious value. In a spiritual religion the eternal destiny of man is linked with the thought of his redemption or salvation. The redemptive process cannot work itself out in the mundane realm, where human weakness and sin will always act as a hindrance. Accordingly, in contrast to the terrestrial life, redemptive religion postulates a supramundane form of being, in which the redemptive process comes to its full and unimpeded realisation. Therefore the religious consciousness cherishes the conviction, that the temporal development of personality issues in a transcendent form of being in which salvation is accomplished. But this doctrine can only find a solid basis in a theistic view of the universe, since from this standpoint both the temporal and the transcendent orders are seen to fall within the scope of the divine redemptive plan. The mundane and the supramundane realms are organically

related in the divine teleological order which is another name for Providence.

The problem of man's destiny, as the religious mind conceives it, has a double aspect, the individual and personal on the one hand, and the collective and universal on the other. In the historic development of religion sometimes the former side has predominated and sometimes the latter. In certain instances it has been the destiny of the race which has governed the religious outlook, and slender importance has attached to the fate of the individual. This tendency belongs to the earlier rather than to the latest stage of religious evolution. Sometimes as the outcome of deep-felt needs a religion at a point in its evolution begins to lay a fresh stress and value on the individual and his fate. An illustration of this is the rise of the Mystery Religions in Greece. But a complete view should neglect neither side; for one is involved in the other, and the ideal is a just synthesis of both. It will be of some interest and value, I think, to examine briefly the way in which the eschatological problem has developed in a concrete religion. For this purpose the most important religions are the Hebrew and the Christian.

The development of the idea of a future life among the Hebrews reveals certain peculiar and interesting features. Up to a period comparatively

late in the history of the Hebrew race its eschatology remained meagre and crude. The ideas underlying that eschatology were the ideas of primitive and nature religion rather than those we associate with an ethical religion; and they continued long in an untransformed state. No uplifting hope of a blessed future for himself inspired the early Israelite. Sheol, the place of departed spirits, was a dim and cheerless realm, like the Greek Hades, where the ghosts of the departed dragged out a miserable and forlorn existence. Even up to the time of the eighth-century prophets this rude eschatology survived, and it came to stand in a somewhat marked contrast to the ethical teaching about Jahveh which entered into the substance of the prophetic message. The inconsistency, if surprising, is explicable. The religion of Israel, in common with Semitic religion, was dominated by the idea that it was not the individual but the people or nation which was the unit in the religious relation. The covenant was between Jahveh and the nation, not between Jahveh and the individual; and the individual could only enjoy the blessings of the covenant in virtue of his membership in the chosen race. The promises which were to be the reward of religious loyalty were promises to the nation, and no mention was made of the individual Hebrew. Accordingly the future to which the

Israelite looked forward was the glorified future of his people under the favour of the Covenant God. The meagre place left to the individual in this religious scheme helps to explain the backwardness of Hebrew eschatology and the long absence of any clear hope of personal immortality in Hebrew religion. With the growth of ethical monotheism, however, it became more and more difficult for these crude ideas about the fate of the dead—ideas which were really a heritage of older religion—to survive alongside the new faith in God. The catastrophe of the Exile, with the suffering and discouragement it entailed, undermined the old hope of a glorified future for the whole nation. It became necessary to differentiate the true Israel from the faithless among the people, and to distinguish piety of heart from a purely formal religion. Only a righteous people could inherit the blessing of a righteous God. The changing fortunes of his race taught the pious Hebrew that the rule of Jahveh was wider than Israel: alien nations were the instruments of his purpose, and Jahveh was the God of the whole earth. Religion with its expansion towards universalism gained a new inwardness of content: Jahveh desired mercy rather than sacrifice, and his law must be written on the heart. Hence a deeper value came to be set on the individual, and this new valuation became the foundation on

which Hebrew faith rose to a spiritual conception of a future life. Though the message of the eighth-century prophets was one essentially for the nation, and their hope was a national hope, late in the following century the germs of a new individualism begin to appear. Jeremiah speaks of a retribution for the individual: "Every one shall die for his own iniquity" (xxxi. 30). This new reference to the individual is repeated in Ezekiel: "Every soul is God's" (xviii. 4). This fresh sense for personal religion and personal responsibility along with the deepened feeling of the value of the single soul led the Hebrew mind on to a faith in a future life for man. The writer of the Book of Job is obviously feeling after the idea: "And after my skin hath thus been destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (xix. 26–27). There are anticipations of immortality in two late Psalms, the 49th and the 73rd. "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for he will receive me": "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me into glory." One can see how the feeling of communion with God gave the Hebrew a confidence in some better thing after death. Taught by inner experience and by the hard crises of history, the religious thinkers of Israel advanced to a definite faith in a

life after death. "Step by step through the slow processes of the religious life, through the ofttimes halting logic of spiritual experience, the religious thinkers of Israel were led to the moral conception of the future life, and to the certainty of their own share therein."[1]

By the beginning of the third century B.C. the doctrine of the resurrection had been developed, and it was linked with the thought of the immortality of the righteous in the Messianic Kingdom. In a late fragment which has been incorporated in the Book of Isaiah, we have the conception of a resurrection to new life of the members of the holy people (xxvi. 19). This resurrection was the sequel to a righteous life on earth. In the Book of Daniel the illustrious saints and teachers are to have part in a blessed resurrection, while notorious apostates have a resurrection to 'shame and everlasting contempt' (xii. 2–3). But it is in the Apocalypses of the last two centuries before our era that the belief in a 'blessed future life' appears in a developed and well-defined form. By this time the idea of an eternal Messianic Kingdom on earth had been abandoned, and the resurrection and the final judgment come at the close of the Messianic Kingdom. Yet the notion of immortality is not

[1] Charles, *op. cit.*, pp. 153–154. I take this opportunity of expressing my indebtedness to the volume.

put forward as a purely individual hope. No doubt the expectation of a glorified future for the whole nation had faded away. But still it is a common good which the righteous Hebrew trusts to share with the righteous people; and his membership in the holy people, as well as his own faithfulness, gave him ground for the assurance of a happy life after death. It is important to remember that this living and widely diffused expectation had its chief source and support in the Apocalyptic Literature of the last two centuries B.C.; and to realise this is necessary, if we are to understand the position of the belief in early Christianity. And it is only in times comparatively recent that the significance of this Literature for the study of primitive Christianity has been appreciated.

The story of the progress of Hebrew religion towards a doctrine of immortality is extremely suggestive. It illustrates the truth that a belief in immortality must find a place in a religion which is truly spiritual: when the religion of Israel became ethical, personal, and inward, the new value set on the individual led necessarily to faith in his eternal destiny. That Jahveh should leave the souls of the faithful in Sheol was inconceivable.

The atmosphere in which primitive Christianity developed was an atmosphere permeated by

Apocalyptic ideas. Notions of a resurrection and of a future life were familiar, and a belief in immortality was entertained by many, though not by all the Jews. In his references to immortality Jesus was touching on a topic which, owing to the teaching of Apocalytic, was, so to speak, in the air.

Jesus' own teaching on the life hereafter is marked by deep insight as well as by reserve. On some of the problems connected with the future life he was silent or said little. But on the fact that human existence was not annihilated by death he spoke with perfect confidence, and with unerring discernment he brought the hope of a blessed immortality into living relation with the character of God. So far as the sources of his teaching on the subject are to be found outside himself, they are to be traced to passages in the Old Testament and to Apocalyptic Literature. But in a greater degree they rest on his own unique consciousness of God and his profound experience of spiritual communion with Him. In the light of this experience he taught the value of the individual and the infinite possibilities of human life. The gain of the whole world will not compensate for the loss of the soul. This conception of the value of personality stands in the closest relation to the conception of God in the gospel of Christ. God is the Father of men:

He loves and cares for His earthly children, and will not give them a stone for bread. He knows all their needs. That this intimate fellowship should be destroyed by death is not conceivable: for God, as Jesus declared, 'is not the God of the dead but of the living,' and 'all live unto Him.' The life of God in man cannot be extinguished by the dissolution of the material organism. The communion of the human soul with God is the fulfilment of the divine purpose, and a fact of supreme value: the conservation of this value is a just expectation which is based on the character of God. As has been remarked, Jesus raises our idea of humanity, so that its immortality naturally follows.[1]

It is important to remember that the destiny of man, as Christ conceived it, is never a purely individual matter: on the contrary, his doctrine implies a true union of the individual and social aspects of the problem. In his actual teaching he does not so much speak of immortality in the strict sense as of the destiny of man, and this was bound up with the nature and issues of the Divine Kingdom. Man finds his self-fulfilment, not in isolation, not even in seeking a private salvation, but in living as a member of the Kingdom of God, and his future destiny is linked with the development and consummation of that Kingdom.

[1] Adams Brown, *The Christian Hope*, p. 191.

Salvation is personal, yet more than personal: it has as its correlative membership in the Kingdom and spiritual self-realisation through it. Now the Kingdom of Heaven is both present and future: here and now it lives and grows in the world, but its goal and completion lie beyond the world. For what is realised under earthly conditions would not be the highest good, and the individual as a member of the redeemed society reaches the final end of eternal blessedness in the Kingdom of Heaven as transcendent. The Christian hope is thus both personal and social: it has its beginning and growth on earth and calls for earnest endeavour here, but its consummation is not here but in the eternal world. Some have thought that the Christian ideal encourages men to neglect social good and civic progress as things of little moment. "The earthly city seemed poor and contemptible to men whose eyes beheld the City of God coming in the clouds of heaven. Thus the centre of gravity, so to say, was shifted from the present to a future life, and however much the other world may have gained, there can be little doubt that this one lost heavily by the change."[1] If the Christian hope has sometimes acted in this way, it was because it had grown narrow and had lost touch with the mind of Christ. The Christian's vocation is to labour for the Kingdom here

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 194.

and now by the promotion of individual and social good, for there is no harvest in the future without toil in the present. The truth is, the Kingdom of Heaven in no way weakens mundane social values. But it sets them in a new perspective, and places the full realisation of the Good in a higher world.

In the teaching of Paul and the Johannine writings the hope of immortality is intimately associated with the Christian experience, an experience mediated by the person and work of Christ. This vital experience gave the disciples of Jesus a new hope for themselves and mankind. In the spiritual experience of the Christian there is revealed the 'power of an endless life,' a life which lifts the soul above the dominion of decay and death. So St. Paul records his profound conviction that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," who are 'the first-fruits of the spirit,' and wait 'for the redemption of the body' (Rom. viii. 18–23). To the apostle the experience of the new life was a pledge that the Christian had in him a power which could not be impaired by bodily decay and was stronger than death. "Though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). In the Johannine writings there is the same emphasis on the Christian experience as

an inner life which rises superior to the doom of mortality. In 'the love of the brethren' men have passed from death unto life, and believers are conscious that they are already in possession of a life which is eternal. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 17). This eternal life is the supreme good, and it comes from union with the Source of life. "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John v. 11). The full fruition of this unquenchable life will be achieved in the transcendent Kingdom of God.

The Epistles of Paul and the Gospel and Epistles of John take common ground in finding a witness of immortality in spiritual experience. But Paul also connects the Christian hope with the resurrection of Christ. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14).[1] And no doubt this may be a confirmation to the faith of those who already believe in immortality. It will be an assurance to them, that there is at work in the universe a Power stronger than the processes of decay and death. On the other hand, an argument from a single event in the past has its limit-

[1] Paul, it may be noted, does not entertain the idea of an immortality of the soul as such: the soul must be clothed with some kind of body.

ations, and it may not bring conviction to those who have not entered into the Christian view of life. The difficulties in the narratives will appeal to those who approach the question in a detached and critical frame of mind, though these difficulties do not carry the same force and meaning to those who regard the problem in the light of Christian experience. To some minds there will always be an objection to making a single historical fact a sufficient basis for a universal inference, and they will point out that the person of Christ, in the doctrine of the Church, is differentiated from that of ordinary humanity. In which case it would not follow that what was true of Christ is necessarily true of all men. For these reasons one cannot expect that much will be gained by taking the resurrection of Christ as an isolated fact, and making it the basis of an argument for human immortality. The valuation a man puts upon the evidence materially depends on whether he approaches it from the Christian view of the world or not. The sceptic turns from the evidence unconvinced: the Christian finds it confirm his faith that death is the gateway to life.

This brief survey of the idea of immortality in the Christian religion will, I think, strengthen our conviction, that faith in a life hereafter has its final ground in faith in the character of God. The Christian hope rests on this, and not on any proof

that men are intrinsically immortal. Faith in the divine character was the core of Christ's own teaching on the subject. It is also involved in the argument from Christian experience which finds a place in the Pauline and Johannine message. For the new life, as it is revealed in those who have fellowship with God through Christ, is a life of transcendent value in the soul. This life is an inner treasure which faith holds that God will conserve: it is therefore an inner spring of hope and confidence.

The place which immortality fills in developed spiritual religion may now be restated in a more definite form. It stands for an essential element in the working out of the meaning and purpose of redemptive religion, since redemption cannot come to its full realisation within the present world-order. The earthly life is only a stage in a redemptive process which reaches beyond it. The ultimate *raison d'être* for a development to a transcendent order is the truth that God Himself, in one aspect of His nature, transcends the present form of existence in space and time. Hence if man's goal and destiny is with God, it cannot lie within the present order of things. On the other hand, the assurance that man is capable of an eternal destiny must depend on the valuation which is set upon him and his spiritual experience. Now the whole drift of Christian teaching is, that we

cannot valuate man truly if we isolate him from God. Christianity emphasises the fact, that man is linked to God by an inner bond which can be expressed by the figure of Father and child. This fact is the deepest thing in life. The same truth is also implied in the doctrine that man is made in the image of God. In the end, this conception of the relation of man to God presupposes the complementary aspect of the Divine Nature: God is transcendent, but He is also immanent in the world and human life. The immanence of God as redemptive Spirit in the souls of men gives its surpassing value to spiritual experience and to spiritual communion. As the apostle said, we have this 'treasure in earthen vessels,' but the nature and value of the treasure are a reason for believing that it is not destroyed with the dissolution of the earthly tabernacle. Death is a crisis to the Christian as it is to other men, but it is a crisis which marks the point of transition to a higher form of being. In the fact of communion with God a principle is implied which carries man beyond the mundane stage of development. The power to overcome the world and to subdue the lusts of the flesh, in which the divine life in the soul is manifested, gives to human personality a transcendent significance in virtue of which it has access to a supramundane realm. This is the truly religious or Christian view of personality,

and it carries with it the assurance that the spiritual life, on earth incomplete at the best, will come to completeness hereafter. If we reject the religious view of personality, if we ignore the tie which binds man to God, I do not think we can have any confidence that he has a destiny above and beyond the world in which he lives and acts for a little. Are you not, it may be said, forgetting the ethical argument? The truth is, the ethical conception of life cannot stand by itself: we must either try to reduce it to the natural or carry it up into the spiritual. The former attempt cannot possibly succeed. The alternative is the frank recognition that the ethical view of man and his vocation, when its implications are thought out, leads up to the religious view. To reject the religious conception of personalitly is, in the long-run, to fall back on the belief, that human life is only a transient episode in the vast cosmic process, 'a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.'

To what extent, it may be asked, does religion involve a doctrine of the manner in which the lower form of existence passes into the higher? Now plainly it is the *fact* which is of spiritual value, and not the way in which it is accomplished. Christianity has no clear-cut doctrine on the subject, and only touches the problem in connexion with the transition of the Kingdom on

earth to the Kingdom in Heaven. To some it has seemed the passage from the one to the other must be catastrophic, and they think there is an analogy in the crisis of death in the history of the individual.[1] To dogmatise on the matter is not wise, but one cannot see that the catastrophic view is the only possible one. It is a survival of the Apocalyptic outlook on the world, and may be revised and modified in the light of fresh experience and knowledge. The transition from the mundane to the supramundane is, *ex hypothesi*, constantly taking place in the history of individuals. For this reason, if for no other, a catastrophic close to human history is not indispensable, even though it is in harmony with an ancient tradition. On the one hand, the transfiguration of the material basis of life is in keeping with Christian ideas, and finds a partial, if somewhat misleading, expression in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. In popular thought this has come to mean the resurrection of the fleshly organism, a conception full of difficulties which was explicitly rejected by St. Paul. On the other, the notion of a transfigured organism can be brought into intimate relation with the speculative idea of the soul as the central and constitutive principle which forms for itself a higher kind of body to be its organ in the life

[1] So Kaftan, *Dogmatik*, pp. 637–638.

hereafter. From this standpoint the transcendent kingdom of transfigured persons would constantly be in process of being realised. In Pauline phrase 'the natural body' after death would be constantly passing into 'the spiritual body.' In any case the sudden and catastrophic close of human history, accompanied by a dramatic transfiguration of the material world, does not seem to be a hypothesis called for in any religious interest. A continuous and gradual transition from the lower to the higher order is possible. The full realisation of the heavenly kingdom would come when the redemptive process was complete, and mankind had entered into the full enjoyment of that transfigured life in which the material is transformed into the perfect instrument of the spiritual. In this higher stage of being death is transcended and goodness reigns supreme.

There are other issues connected with the traditional eschatology which have led to much discussion. The question has been put whether the end of the incurably bad is extinction or purification and ultimate restoration. On such points it is not essential that we should dogmatise, and especially so when it is hard to reach a decision either on grounds of authority or rational evidence. The opinion formed by the individual on such questions, if he forms any opinion, is often due to personal feeling. But religious

eschatology is a sphere where dogmatism about details is rash and can serve no good purpose, and the man of spiritual insight will combine faith with reserve. On one point, indeed, it is possible to speak with a reasonable degree of confidence, and this because it is intimately related to the ethical character of God and to His redemptive purpose in the world. There cannot be an abiding dualism at the heart of things: the end of development cannot be a Kingdom of darkness which remains to the last in eternal contrast and antagonism to the Kingdom of light. For if spiritual development ended in such a contradiction, it would mean that it closed in failure and defeat. The inevitable conclusion would be that the Divine plan had been frustrated, and the Divine saving purpose had failed to reach its complete fulfilment. It is perhaps possible to harmonise a belief of this kind with the conception of a finite Deity who is hampered by difficulties which interfere with the realisation of his purpose: the belief cannot be reconciled with the Christian idea of God as the living Ground of the universe and the Supreme Spirit 'from whom and through whom and to whom are all things,'—a God of infinite goodness and love who works as a redeeming spirit in history and human lives. This divine redeeming purpose must be achieved, and evil cannot finally resist the transforming

power of divine goodness. To doubt or deny this undermines the foundations of a spiritual faith, which implies a full trust and assurance that the Divine Will can accomplish its end. This faith reasserts itself even in the darkest days, for this confidence in the conquering power of the good is the life-blood of spiritual religion:

> "O yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood."

The Kingdom of God is a transcendent kingdom of personal spirits, and it is, as we have seen, the consummation of personal and collective development. If this be true, human history must be a progress, not a deterioration: on a wide survey it must reveal a growing good. It seems to us that a dispassionate view of human experience does, on the whole, confirm this judgment. No doubt if it could be shown that evil dominates and controls human life, faith in future perfection would lack justification. Now we do not minimise the wide presence and activity of sin and evil: they are very real, and the way in which they thwart and impede human progress is most apparent. The antagonism of good and evil often reaches a tragic intensity, and ostensible culture may veil powers of darkness which leap forth in a time of crisis to work destruction. Yet

even at its strongest, sin wins no enduring victory, and the threatening strength of the forces of evil only quickens into more intense activity the forces of goodness; and there is a conquering power in the good which even transforms evil into a means to its own development.

The presence of sin in the world makes progress a hard and bitter conflict, and the good can only grow in the individual and society as the fruit of struggle and earnest endeavour. Life for man is a long series of tests. Hence human progress is not an inflexible movement in a predetermined line, but a spiritual task, and so human experience is a discipline and an education. The fruit of failure, error, and suffering is to teach those who are capable of learning to turn from the evil and to hold fast to the good. Evolution has been a long and often painful process in which man has slowly advanced to freedom and self-consciousness. As the outcome of this age-long struggle, history discloses an increasing good, and man in coming to know himself better has come to know God better. When we are asked the meaning of this development, we seem to find the answer in man—man who emerges from the heart of the great world-process; who advances slowly from natural to ethical and to spiritual life; who learns to follow distant ends, and finally form ideals which transcend the world itself. Man is a being 'of

large discourse' whose outlook is not bounded by the earthly horizon; and the religious conception of his transcendent destiny is in harmony with human aspirations and ideals. From the religious standpoint man's earthly development is only a stage in a vaster movement. The good, dimly discerned in the natural order, only reaches its fulfilment in the spiritual and transcendent order. This developmental process is spiritual, and it is well to repeat that it is not mechanically determined. Humanity is not swept resistlessly on to a transcendent goal. As the Christian religion teaches, the ideal of perfection and full salvation in a higher world is a destiny after which man must strive, and he is not crowned unless he strive. In apprehending his transcendent end by faith and in his free endeavour to reach it, he fulfils his divine vocation and realises the religious meaning of life. In this sense the eternal life is the issue of faithful endeavour.

> . . . "The energy of life may be
> Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
> And he who flagged not in the earthly strife,
> From strength to strength advancing—only he,
> His soul well knit and all his battles won,
> Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life."

But if spiritual development were a merely human movement, there would be no guarantee that the goal would be reached. Spiritual

development is a manifestation of human freedom, but there is more in it than this. Behind the activity of man is the deeper activity of God. We call to mind the paradox of true religion, the paradox which is contained in the memorable words of Paul: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh within you to will and to do of His good pleasure." Man works, but God works in and through man without superseding his freedom and initiative. It is the highest privilege of mortals to be fellow-workers with God, and it is the deep pervading activity of God in the lives of men which is the final assurance that the divine purpose will be fulfilled. The thought lies at the centre of Christianity, that the God revealed in Christ is present to the souls of men, purifying, uplifting, redeeming them. And it is the presence of this redemptive life in the world that is the pledge of that full salvation which is eternal life. Speculative reflexion may do something to justify this conception, but for the Christian it is primarily a conviction won from religious experience. The idea of a God who imparts Himself to His finite creatures, and in love redeems them, has been born of historic Christianity. Faith in the God revealed in Christ has made faith in the divine redeeming work in man intimate and real. For it has taught mankind to realise that the

highest idea of the Divine is not power but love:

> "So through the thunder comes a human voice,
> Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here.'"

If the Christian doctrine that God is Love conveys a true thought, it conveys with it a strong assurance in the eternal destiny of souls. For a God who is Love must respond to the spiritual needs of His human children: at the last He cannot cast the souls which proceed from Him as 'rubbish to the void.'

Faith in a spiritual God who transcends the world, and yet is the invisible spring of all pure thoughts and upward endeavour, carries with it faith in the value of the soul and confidence in its transcendent goal. A godless world is a world which has in it no sure hope for humanity. If there be no eternal Father of Spirits there is nothing to save us from the melancholy confession of the old Roman poet:

> "*Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,*
> *Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*"

Even the strongest argument for immortality—the ethical argument—becomes lame and feeble, if there be not in the universe a supreme personal Power which makes for righteousness. In days when faith in God runs low, there has followed lack of faith in man's divine vocation and utter

disregard of human rights. The gospel of materialism and the worship of power have brought misery on the innocent as well as the guilty, and they will be judged by their fruits. Yet amid this world-travail and anguish the spiritual forces are being revived and quickened, and by and by they will emerge triumphant. Reverence and love will return to us again with faith in God and the eternal vocation of man.

The shadow of mystery will always fall on the life after death, and of many things we must be content to remain ignorant. It is in keeping with our moral and spiritual limitations, that we only 'see through a glass darkly' when we turn our gaze to the Beyond. But so long as man has a living faith in the God Who is revealed in Christ, he will not fear that at the last he must go down into darkness and silence. This world is not all: "in our Father's house there are many mansions."

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